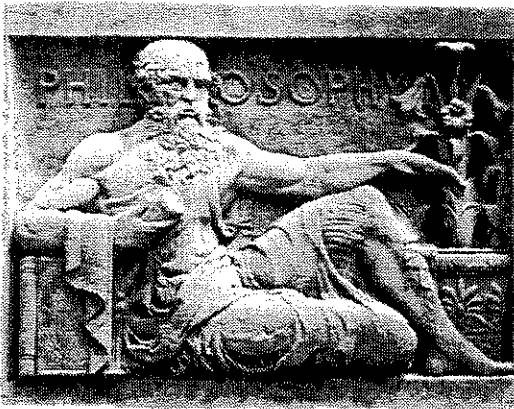


# Michigan Philosophy News



for friends, alumni, and alumnae  
of the Department of Philosophy,  
The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
Fall, 1995

Dear Friends of the Department:

In this issue, we celebrate the career of the late William K. Frankena, Roy Wood Sellars Distinguished College Professor Emeritus of Philosophy. As I previously wrote to those of you who studied at Michigan during the forty-one year period that he was a member of the faculty, Professor Frankena died suddenly on Saturday, October 22, 1994, in Ann Arbor. He was 86. No member of our Department has better represented its ideals — with respect to intellectual and moral integrity, philosophical insight and clarity, teaching and advising, institutional service, and personal friendship. Everyone here has been moved by the outpouring of both affection for Bill, and respect for his teaching and scholarship. Bill's students and colleagues shared reminiscences at a campus memorial Friday, December 9. We have received inquiries from persons seeking to research the later stages of his philosophical work. The Central Division of the American Philosophical Association will hold a symposium, "The Legacy of William Frankena," at its meetings in Chicago this coming April. The speakers will be Richard Brandt, Bill's colleague and friend at Michigan for more than thirty years; Steve Darwall, whose work in the history of ethics owes much to Bill's inspiration; and Robert Audi (Nebraska), who received his Ph.D. from Michigan in 1967. Memorial minutes appeared in the May, 1995, *Proceedings and Addresses of The American Philosophical Association*. We reprint below five articles on Bill's philosophical thought, including his own summary of central themes in his writings in moral philosophy. I provide details at the close of this letter.

Apart from the sadness associated with Bill's death, last year was an unusual period in the history of the Department. Together with Classical Studies, our permanent neighbors in Angell Hall, the Department has been in exile at the Administrative Services Building since last June. As I first reported in the Fall, 1993 issue of *MPN*, Angell Hall is undergoing extensive renovation. Construction began in February, 1994. Though the building remains in use, Philosophy and Classics agreed to relocate for two years, so that the contractor would have access to one unoccupied floor, or the equivalent, at a time. The remaining occupants play "musical floors," with the renovation of different areas of the building proceeding in phases. As of this writing, the renovation of the fifth floor, and of the north end of the basement and first floor, is complete. The first floor south,

which houses the Tanner Philosophical Library, has been undergoing renovation during the summer. Renovation of the Department's second floor space begins this November. Other units have been utilizing this area, while renovation proceeds on the space they have vacated. As this is a full-scale renovation, including heating and cooling, electrical, plumbing, and emergency systems, as well as building accessibility and modifications to the floor plan in many areas, Angell Hall occupants find themselves in makeshift and somewhat stressful conditions. We believe that the decision to relocate was for the best.

At the same time, there has been a significant cost in student-faculty contact. Our temporary location at the corner of Hoover and Greene is in the Physical Plant Complex on the "Athletic Campus," nearly a mile southwest of Central Campus. We are an easy walk from Michigan Stadium, Crisler and Yost Arenas, and Ferry Field, but a good commute from undergraduate classrooms, the Graduate Library, and local bookstores in the "Diag" and State Street areas. Commute we do, in the interest of holding undergraduate classes on central campus. Our faculty and graduate student teaching assistants also hold office hours in a "hub," two former faculty offices on the second floor of Angell Hall. The space is overcrowded, and often noisy due to the renovation. With C. C. Little and East Engineering, as well as Angell, under renovation, this is all the space available. When renovation of the second floor begins, our hub will have to migrate. As I mentioned last year, our graduate students have the worst of this, commuting to campus both to teach undergraduate sections, and to take courses that also serve advanced undergraduates. One byproduct of the inconvenient location is that faculty and students are in the Department and its common spaces much less frequently. The resulting loss in informal intellectual exchange cannot be repaired. The renovation is proceeding on schedule, so that we expect to return to Angell Hall next summer.

There is some wonderful news in regard to the facilities that will await us, thanks to a major gift from the Tanner Charitable Trust in support of the Tanner Library. It has long been the Department's hope to expand the Library, and to have a seminar room with convenient access to the Library collection. In conjunction with the Angell renovation, the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts committed two bays of space across the hall from the existing Tanner Library as a combined Library Adjunct and Seminar Room. The Tanner Charitable Trust gift,

in combination with College funds, will enable us to refurbish and update the existing Library rooms, and to upgrade the new space, beyond baseline plans for the renovation, so that the overall facility will be gracious and inviting. The gift will also help to maintain the Library, and to preserve current levels of staff services. It is a pleasure to thank the Reverend Carolyn Tanner Irish (who received her B.A. in Philosophy from Michigan in 1962), Chair of the Board of the Trust, for this generous gift.

The Tanner family's benefactions to the Department now span a quarter century. In 1970, the late Obert Clark Tanner, and Grace Adams Tanner, provided funds to establish the Tanner Philosophical Library in Angell Hall. Michigan was fortunate to be among the small group of institutions where Professor Tanner initially established Tanner Lectures on Human Values in 1978. Professor and Mrs. Tanner funded the expansion of the Library to a second room in 1979, and established an endowment in support of the Library in 1985. The Department is deeply grateful for the Tanner family's continued support. The Tanner Library has been a Departmental gem for a quarter century; we are now assured that it will maintain its central role in the intellectual life of the Department.

There have been a number of recent transitions in the faculty. George Mavrodes has retired from active faculty status, after a distinguished career as one of the world's foremost philosophers of religion. A member of the faculty for thirty-three years, his teaching and scholarship contributed importantly to the Program on Studies in Religion, as well as to Philosophy. Professor Mavrodes has been in the vanguard of an influential movement that brought the tools of contemporary analytic philosophy constructively to bear in elucidating the epistemological and metaphysical foundations of religion, and of Christianity in particular. He has published two books and nearly one hundred articles, on such topics as revelation, evil, faith and reason, Divine omnipotence, resurrection, miracles, personal identity and survival, as well as on issues in ethics and social policy that intersect with religion and morality — abortion, pacifism, the just war, and nuclear deterrence. Over the years, faculty colleagues came to rely on George's incisive philosophical criticism; students on his wide learning and scholarship in philosophy, religion, and theology; and staff on his consideration and personal kindness. Happily, he will remain in Ann Arbor.

Nicholas White has resigned from the Department to take a position in the Department of Philosophy, University of Utah. A member of the Department for twenty-six years, he was also Adjunct Professor in Classical Studies. Professor White has contributed two books and twenty-five articles in ancient Greek philosophy, and a number of translations. His *Modern Morality and Greek Ethics* is in preparation. His Monday night seminars reflected his wide-ranging interests in contemporary metaphysics, philosophy of mathematics, and philosophy of language, as well as Greek philosophy. He served the Department as Associate Chair, Placement Director, and Director of Graduate Studies, in addition to service to the College and Senate Assembly. His spouse, Patricia White, received the M.A. in Philosophy at Michigan in 1974. She is currently Professor of Law, University

of Utah Law School. I know that Nick and Tricia's many colleagues and friends over the years at Michigan join me in wishing them well in Salt Lake City.

Again this year, our faculty has received a variety of honors and recognitions. The College has recommended to the Regents that Lawrence Sklar be awarded a Collegiate Professorship. Professor Sklar has made remarkable career contributions to the philosophy of physics and science. His study of the philosophical foundations of statistical mechanics, *Physics and Chance* (Cambridge, 1993), is a nominee for the Lakatos Award in the Philosophy of Science. His *Philosophy of Physics* (Westview and Oxford, 1992), was chosen as a Library of Science selection. Earlier in his career, he received the Franklin J. Matchette Prize for *Space, Time and Spacetime* (California, 1974). Professor Sklar is a dynamic teacher, who brings to the classroom the same lucid exposition of the subtle interplay between physics and philosophy that characterizes his written work. His *Philosophy of Space and Time* (Philosophy 423) has the highest student demand of any of our advanced undergraduate offerings. In reading external letters in support of his nomination for a Collegiate Professorship, I was struck by the role of Larry's writing and teaching in attracting to his field some of its major practitioners. In naming their Chairs, Collegiate Professors have an opportunity to honor a former member of our faculty. Larry will be the William K. Frankena Professor of Philosophy.

There have been other changes in continuing appointments, reflecting the contributions of colleagues in research, teaching, and service. David Velleman, who began his career at Michigan as William Wilhartz Assistant Professor of Philosophy, has been promoted to full Professor. Sally Haslanger, who works in feminist philosophy as well as ancient and contemporary metaphysics, is assuming a quarter-time appointment in the Women's Studies Program beginning this year.

Stephen Darwall received a Lockwood Award, one of five annual awards to faculty in recognition of excellence in research and teaching. Two members of the Department, Sally Haslanger and Stephen Yablo, were successful in the first competition for University Humanities Awards, which provide released time for research. Professor Haslanger is declining the Humanities Award, in favor of a Fellowship at the National Humanities Center in Chapel Hill. In other external grants, Professor Sklar received a National Endowment Humanities Fellowship. Kendall Walton received a College Research Excellence Award, a recognition initiated by the Dean this year, for his work on the representational arts. The University's International Institute will fund a proposal from Professors Edwin Curley and Darwall for an interdisciplinary seminar on religious toleration.

It is a pleasure to welcome Stephen Everson, who joins the Department this fall as Assistant Professor. Professor Everson holds the Ph.D. from the University of London. Recipient of Oxford's Conington Prize in ancient philosophy, he has published articles on Aristotle's moral psychology and moral and political philosophy, ancient skepticism, Epicurus, and Hume's theory of belief. He has a book on Aristotle's theory of perception forthcoming from Oxford University Press, and is editor of the four-volume series *Cambridge Companions to Ancient Thought*.

In addition to ancient philosophy, Professor Everson specializes in moral philosophy and philosophy of mind. He has held positions at Oxford and Cambridge Universities. At Cambridge, he was Director of Undergraduate Studies at Trinity College.

We have a faculty committed to teaching, as well as to research. James Joyce and Jack Meiland received LS&A Excellence in Teaching Awards this year. Professor Joyce's introductory course, *The Nature of Science*, draws on the history of astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology, as background for discussion of the nature of scientific method and the confirmation of scientific theories. The course includes an examination of "creation science," and the debate about teaching evolution and creationism in the public schools. Professor Meiland's Award is for general excellence as a classroom instructor, and course development; he will introduce two new courses — *Great Books in Philosophy*, and *Science, Culture, and Values* — this coming year.

During 1994-95, we offered six new undergraduate courses, and revived a seventh: *Action Theory* (taught by David Velleman), *American Philosophy* (Jack Meiland), *Film and Video Studies* (David Hills), *Philosophy of Biology* (Ruth Millikan), *Philosophy of Music* (Ken Walton), *Topics in Feminist Philosophy* (Elizabeth Anderson), and *Topics in the History of Philosophy* (Ed Curley). The new and revived offerings include cross-listings with *American Culture*, *Women's Studies*, and the *School of Music*. *Philosophy of Biology* serves as an approved cognate for the *General Biology* concentration. Finally, *Philosophy of Religion* (Curley) and *Law and Philosophy* (Anderson) were both reformatted so that they divide into sections; this format offers students more opportunity for discussion, and makes these courses available to a larger number of students. The Department also regularly contributes to the College's program of faculty-taught seminars for first-year undergraduates.

Five graduating seniors wrote Honors theses in Philosophy this past academic year: Ernesto Garcia, "A Reconstruction of Human Finitude"; Rony Guldman, "Heidegger, Time, and Freedom"; Mark Loeffler, "Wittgenstein and Moishe Postone: Towards a Marxian Reconstruction of Language"; Dan McGuinness, "The Possibility of True Responsibility"; and Daron Morris, "The Problem of Objectivity in German Idealism." We congratulate these concentrators, and thank their supervisors: Paul Franks, David Hills, Jim Joyce, Jack Meiland, and David Velleman. For the second year in a row, a number of concentrators attended the New England Undergraduate Philosophy Conference at Tufts University. Garcia was on the program, reading a paper on Kierkegaard.

We awarded a number of student prizes last April. Cody Gilmore received the fourth William K. Frankena Prize for excellence in the undergraduate concentration. Gilmore, an Honors concentrator, will graduate this coming December. He has served as President of the Undergraduate Philosophy Club. Heather Bell received the third Charles L. Stevenson Prize for excellence in the graduate program. The Prize is awarded for an outstanding candidacy dossier, a portfolio of work expected to lead to a dissertation, and presented as part of the requirements for admission to candidacy. Bell works in the philosophy of

logic; her dissertation will offer a defense of a Tarskian theory of logical truth. Both the Stevenson and Frankena Prizes are funded by the Marshall M. Weinberg Endowment. Owing to Mr. Weinberg's generous enhancements to the Endowment in recent years, it now supports a graduate student prize that does double-duty as a substantial summer fellowship, as well as a handsome undergraduate prize. We are grateful to Mr. Weinberg (who received his B.A. in Philosophy from Michigan in 1950) for his generous support, and for his confidence in the Department's programs, faculty, and students.

The second John Dewey Prize for graduate student excellence in undergraduate instruction was awarded to Nadeem Hussain. We nominate the recipient of the Dewey Prize for a Rackham Graduate School Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award; Hussain was successful in the competition. He combines clarity, depth of knowledge, and intellectual rigor with a host of resourceful techniques for reaching each and every student. The teaching evaluations that result are simply stunning. John Devlin and John Doris have been awarded Rackham Predoctoral Fellowships for 1995-96. Devlin works in metaphysics, on a cluster of issues about identity. Doris declined the Predoc; he will be the first Philosophy graduate student to take up a Humanities Institute Graduate Fellowship. Doris' project involves bringing personality theory and social psychology to bear on issues in moral philosophy. (Last year, in reporting the success of Michigan graduate students in winning Charlotte Newcombe Fellowships, I implied that philosophy graduate students at Cornell University received at most one Newcombe in the years 1989 through 1993. I regret that I was mistaken; there were at least three recipients in philosophy at Cornell during this period.)

The job market for our graduate students turned from difficult in 1993-94, to extremely disappointing last year. Though Justin D'Arms (who works in ethics) received tenure-track offers from Maryland, Rutgers, and Ohio State, where he is Assistant Professor beginning this fall, three first-time job seekers did not receive tenure-track offers. Of twenty-two students who have entered the job market the past five years, sixteen have secured tenure-track positions (or the British equivalent), in philosophy or law. Two students who entered the market in recent years received excellent visiting positions, at Bowling Green and Wesleyan. The students who are not being placed in tenure-track positions are excellent teachers and researchers. The harsh job market is a source of continuing concern, and we are trying to keep entering classes small. During 1993-96, an average of eight new doctoral students have entered the doctoral program each year; our admissions "target" remains somewhat below this figure.

Though our relocation has reduced informal philosophical interactions, the Department has continued to support an amazing number of philosophical events outside the classroom. Graduate students again organized the annual spring colloquium (our fourteenth) and served as commentators on the talks, for the fourth consecutive year. The topic was "Political Liberalism." The speakers were John Rawls (Harvard), who addressed an audience of two hundred fifty in the Rackham Amphitheatre, Nancy Fraser (Northwestern), and David Gauthier (Pittsburgh).

The graduate student commentators were Jeffery Allen (on Rawls), Mika Manty (on Fraser), and Chris Roberson (on Gauthier); their contributions were central to the overall success of the program. Christina Frohock did a splendid job arranging the colloquium and associated events.

Our Nelson Philosophers-in-Residence were Bas van Fraassen (Princeton) in the Fall, and Christine Korsgaard (Harvard) in the Winter. Philosophers-in-Residence deliver a public lecture, give two seminars, and meet with students and faculty. Korsgaard's visit will continue this fall. Other speakers during the year included John Broome (Bristol), Richard Moran (Princeton), Nicholas Sturgeon (Cornell), Michael Friedman (Illinois at Chicago), Tyler Burge (UCLA), and Louise Antony (North Carolina). Last year's informal discussion groups were devoted to aesthetics (organized by David Hills and Ken Walton), American philosophy and pragmatism (Jack Meiland), Descartes (Ed Curley), race and racism (Sally Haslanger), and mind and language (Eric Lormand). Louis Loeb and Ian Rumfitt presented papers in our faculty colloquia series.

Daniel Kahneman, Eugene Higgins Professor of Psychology, Princeton University, and Professor of Public Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School, delivered the 1994-95 Tanner Lecture. A Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the Econometric Society, Professor Kahneman has received Distinguished Scientific Contribution Awards from the American Psychological Association and the Society of Consumer Psychology. He has written extensively on visual perception, attention and effort, subjective probability, judgment under uncertainty, statistical intuitions, decision-making, preference reversal, economic fairness, public goods, and other topics. Speaking to an audience of four hundred, on "The Cognitive Psychology of Consequences and Moral Intuitions," Professor Kahneman argued that there are deep inconsistencies within our ethical intuitions. He maintains, for example, there are tensions between our immediate and retrospective evaluations of pleasure; and between intuitions that govern one-at-a-time judgments about single cases, and those that govern our choices when we face two cases that differ only in one critical respect, as in philosophical thought experiments. The participants in the Symposium on the Tanner Lecture were: John Broome (Professor of Economics and Ethics, Bristol University), Frances Kamm (Professor of Philosophy and Adjunct Professor of Law, New York University), and David Premack (Laboratoire de Psycho-Biologie du Développement, École Pratique des Hautes Études).

We reprint in this issue five articles on William Frankena's philosophy. One is his own "Concluding More or Less Philosophical Postscript," originally published in Kenneth Goodpaster's 1976 collection of Professor Frankena's most important articles. The others first appeared in the July, 1981 issue of the *Monist*, which contained ten articles on "The Philosophy of William Frankena." The *Monist* devotes its issues to philosophical topics. Only twice has the thought of a living philosopher served as the "general topic" for an issue. In addition to Frankena, Wilfrid Sellars was honored in this way. We include four articles from the *Monist*: "W. K. Frankena and Ethics of Virtue," by Dick Brandt; "W. K. Frankena and G. E. Moore's Metaethics," by the

late ethicist and historian of philosophy Alan Donagan; "Frankena and Hume on Points of View," by Annette Baier (University of Pittsburgh); and "Frankena on Environmental Ethics," by Paul Taylor (Professor Emeritus, Brooklyn College, City University of New York). Bill was an avid bird-watcher, and Professor Taylor's article reminds us of his keen personal and professional interest in nature and the environment. I append to this letter my tribute to Bill on the occasion of the campus memorial last December.

Sincerely,

*Louis E. Loeb*

Louis E. Loeb,  
Chair

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In a 1960 statement for a short biography, Bill Frankena wrote: "My active life outside of my family is devoted to the University, to philosophy, and to learned societies." Active and devoted he was. I would like to remind you of Bill's enormous contributions to the Department of Philosophy, the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and the University of Michigan, perhaps filling in a few details that you might not know.

Bill came to Michigan as a graduate student in philosophy in 1930, after receiving the B.A. from Calvin College. Psychology had been officially separated from philosophy at Michigan just one year earlier. Bill received an M.A. in 1931. As I reconstruct it, he remained at Michigan as a doctoral student until 1933. He passed his preliminary examinations that year, but then left to pursue doctoral studies at Harvard. There he studied with C. I. Lewis, Ralph B. Perry, and Alfred North Whitehead. He spent 1935-36 at Cambridge, where he studied with C. D. Broad and G. E. Moore. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1937.

Bill joined the Michigan Department, as an Instructor, the year he received the doctorate. He was well-known to the Department — DeWitt Parker, Roy Wood Sellars, and C. H. Langford had all taught him as a Michigan graduate student. Bill was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1940, and to Associate Professor in 1946. He became Professor, and simultaneously Chair of the Michigan Department a mere one year later, in 1947. Northwestern had tried to hire Bill in 1946, as an Associate Professor. Bill declined. In 1947, Northwestern tried again, offering him the chairmanship of their department. Parker, the chair at Michigan, was intent on retaining Bill. Parker offered the Dean of LS&A his resignation as chair, and recommended Bill as his successor, as well as Bill's promotion. The Dean accepted these recommendations, and Bill assumed the chairmanship. Under his stewardship from 1947 to 1961, the Department doubled in size, to a faculty of twelve.

Bill also wrote in the biographical statement: "Teachers, not special events, influenced my life." In turn, he himself had immense influence on his students, some of whom are speakers today. Bill and Paul Henle, who joined the Department the same year, developed a highly successful, historically based, introduction to philosophy. Some of you will remember it as Philosophy 234, though it was Philosophy 34 at the outset. Bill was also

known in those early years of his career for marvelous undergraduate counselling. In recent weeks, I have heard from many of his former students. Some sent tributes. Some wrote testimonials. Others called to talk about Bill, and their feelings for him. Marshall Weinberg, one of Bill's students in Philosophy 34 from whom I have heard, established the William K. Frankena Prize for Excellence in the Undergraduate Concentration a few years ago. The prize is awarded each spring, and Bill was present for the award ceremony the first three years the prize has been awarded. The Department is proud to continue to award the prize, now in memory of Bill, and in fond tribute.

Arthur Burks has written of Bill: "No tribute to [him] would be complete without special mention of the contribution he and Sadie made . . . to the University community through their gracious hospitality. At . . . retirement functions for them, it came out repeatedly that the first people newcomers to the Department had met were the Frankenases; or that it was at the Frankenases' that members of the Department had met certain others from outside the Department; or that the Frankenases had consistently welcomed the office staff, graduate students, and visiting faculty into their home." My experience certainly bears out what Art says. When I joined the Department as a beginning assistant professor, my first dinner invitation was from Bill and Sadie. This was not the sort of thing they had to do. Bill's Chairmanship had ended twenty-three years before; his retirement was around the corner. But there was no letdown in his service and devotion to the department.

Bill spent a full sixty years at the University — as a graduate student, faculty member, or emeritus professor. As recently as 1991, he contributed a paper for our annual Spring Colloquium. Michigan faculty and students in seven decades benefitted from his contributions to the intellectual and social life of the Department. Bill did more than anyone else to make this a community, and was a beloved and revered member of it.

Within the College of LS&A, Bill was a member of the Executive Committee from 1946-48, again from 1951-54, and yet a third time from 1966-68. Two of these periods of service took place, in whole or in part, while he Chaired the Department. He was a member of the LS&A Deanship Committee, also three times.

Bill received virtually every honor the University could bestow. He was appointed Roy Wood Sellars Distinguished College Professor of Philosophy. He was named the first LS&A Distinguished Senior Faculty Lecturer in 1978, and also received the Warner G. Rice Humanities Award for that year. He was known within the University for his integrity, courage, and forthrightness, and dedication to the fundamental values of the institution. Bill played an especially critical role in defense of fundamental academic freedoms during the McCarthy era.

Within the profession, Bill served as Chair of the Board of Officers of the American Philosophical Association, Chair of the Council for Philosophical Studies, and President of the American Philosophical Association's Western Division. He delivered the prestigious Carus Lectures to the Association. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Education. He was a recipient of a Guggenheim

Fellowship, a Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study of Behavioral Science, a National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Fellowship, and a Rockefeller Fellowship. He held visiting positions at Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Tokyo, and the University of Washington.

I will close by reading portions of a letter from Anne Stevenson, Charles Stevenson's daughter. Steve, as he chose to be called, had joined the department nine years after Bill. Anne writes:

I want to express something of my profound sorrow on hearing . . . of Bill Frankena's death. He was for many years my father's closest friend and colleague, while he and Sadie were almost uncle and aunt to me and my sisters. My visit to Bill last fall in his rooms on Glacier Way remains very clear in my memory: his beautifully polished old tools, the precious spinning wheel his wife would never let him buy while she was alive, the books on recent developments in philosophy that were strewn over his coffee table.

I thought the piece in the *Ann Arbor News* was a fine tribute to the Michigan Philosophy Department that Bill and Steve, with Dick Brandt, were so instrumental in building up. And now Dick is the last of the old men. Perhaps only poets speak freely of the philosophy of time — or do philosophers have to become poets when they do?

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## CONCLUDING MORE OR LESS PHILOSOPHICAL POSTSCRIPT\*

One can hardly do anything but acquiesce and cooperate when someone else says he would like to edit a volume of one's previously published papers, even if one has been so doubtful that this should be done as to be unwilling to do it oneself. One is secretly pleased that someone thinks it desirable, hopes that his judgment about this is better than one's own, and acquiesces with only seeming reluctance. One even makes some suggestions about which papers to include and which not, though one leaves the decision to him, and one wonders whether or not to volunteer to write an additional new essay to help (or hinder?) the proposed volume on its way.

In this case, it was decided that I should do something more philosophers should do for volumes of their collected papers (if these come out in time), namely, what St. Augustine did in 427 A.D. in his *Retractiones*, i.e., write a covering postscript of commentary and review that will provide some needed perspective and unity, make at least some of the necessary explanations and corrections, and be otherwise helpful to a reader. This essay, therefore, will not so much restate or summarize the preceding papers, as comment on them in a historical, interpretative, or even critical way. It will also say something about a number of items not reprinted here, mainly to fill out the picture. It will not do

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\*From *Perspectives on Morality: Essays by William K. Frankena*, edited by Kenneth M. Goodpaster. ©1976 by the University of Notre Dame Press. Reprinted by permission.

much to answer possible objections to what I have written, and, of course, it must remain incomplete in other ways. I apologize in advance for the rather autobiographical form it has assumed. It simply turned out to be hard to do what seemed necessary in any other way. I have, however, sought to limit myself to what is relevant and may be useful. It may even be of interest for some readers to follow for a little while the Odyssey of a not very typical, more or less eighteenth-century-minded, moral philosopher of the twentieth century.

Two remarks should be made here. (a) This essay is not self-sufficient, and can only be understood in conjunction with the preceding papers. (b) Historical remarks made in those papers must be taken with some salt. Some of them are mistaken (and, of these, some will be corrected here), and many of them are relative to the time at which they were written.

## I

The first four of the above papers represent a longish period in my writing career, and may be introduced as follows. I entered my graduate work (done at The University of Michigan, Harvard, and Cambridge University) in 1930, with a Calvinistic background and Hegelian sympathies. Paul Henle later remarked that he could see the Calvinism in me but not the Hegelianism, and I suppose this is still true. In my graduate work in ethics I was most influenced by D. H. Parker, R. B. Perry, and C. I. Lewis, who were ethical naturalists (Lewis with a qualification), and by G. E. Moore and C. D. Broad, who were intuitionists; and, roughly speaking, my position during this first period, held very tentatively, was a cognitivist one combining naturalism about "good" and intuitionism about "ought." It seemed to me, as it perhaps had to Henry Sidgwick, that it was unnecessary to be an intuitionist about both and implausible to be one about "good," but important and plausible to be one about obligation, as Sidgwick and A. C. Ewing thought. Later I found out that Richard Price and other eighteenth century intuitionists had held much the same position. Almost the only contemporary philosopher who did was C. A. Campbell,<sup>1</sup> and I took some encouragement from his doing so. In general philosophical methodology and style I was mainly a follower of Moore and Broad, whom I took as my models, much to the disgust of some of my teachers and colleagues.

I had already then some worries, which grew on me, about the intuitionist epistemology and ontology, but it was at first chiefly the intuitionist arguments against naturalism that troubled me. They all seemed much less conclusive to me than to their users, and, moreover, it seemed to me incongruous that intuitionism should depend so much on argument and so little on intuition. These feelings, together with my tendency to be a naturalist about "good" anyway, led me to write the papers included here from this early period. To be a naturalist about the good I had to regard the intuitionist arguments, which were used in the case of the good as well as of the right, as inconclusive, but it seemed to me that I could and should still be an intuitionist about the right, not because there were arguments to disprove naturalism about the right or because naturalism commits a "fallacy," but simply on

the ground that naturalistic definitions of "ought" did not seem to catch its meaning as certain definitions of "good" seemed to do (plus, hopefully, some kind of intuitive awareness of an indefinable non-natural characteristic). In short, I saw no good reason why such a dualistic theory should not be adopted.

"The Naturalistic Fallacy" ("The NF," 1939), my first published paper and still the best known, was an expansion of a passage in my Ph.D. dissertation on intuitionism in recent British ethics, submitted at Harvard in 1937. It was written in a cognitivist frame of mind; i.e., I tended to assume, as both intuitionists and naturalists did, that ethical terms stand for properties and that ethical judgments ascribe properties to their subjects and are true or false in the corresponding sense. A few parentheses and references show that I also had non-cognitivist theories like emotivism and postulationism in mind, e.g., the views of Ledger Wood and C. L. Stevenson, but still, the paper would have to be considerably rewritten if it were to be put in such a form as to take explicit account of such views—let alone views developed after World War II. The idea of a "naturalistic fallacy" remained alive in spite of my effort; indeed, while it was dropped by Moore himself after *Principia Ethica* and was not used by any prominent intuitionist after him, at least not explicitly, it was revived after 1939 by some non-intuitionists. (Actually, all along the main weapon used against naturalists and definists was the open question argument, not the NF. For some discussion of this argument, see the three following articles and *Ethics*, 2nd edition, pp. 99f.) Nevertheless, I believe that my main points about the NF still hold, even though I am myself less inclined to be a naturalist or a cognitivist (even about good) than I was then. I must admit, however, that one of the points I now use against naturalism is very like one of the procedures Moore refers to as "the NF," namely, that of confusing a universal synthetic proposition about the good with a definition of goodness. This will be indicated again later.

Similar remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to "Obligation and Value in the Ethics of G. E. Moore" (1942). Again, my terminology was not such as I now would use. Also, my expression of my main theses was somewhat careless, considering the fact that it was Moore I was dealing with. Moore wrote a long reply in which he took me to task, and he was quite right in some of the points he made in his acute and careful way about my use of "normative," "as such," "by nature," etc.<sup>2</sup> Once more, however, I believe that my main contentions were correct and can be restated and maintained. For example, I put one of them by saying that, if intrinsic goodness is either a simple or an intrinsic quality or both, as Moore thinks it is, then it cannot be as such, essentially, or by nature normative. By "normative" here I meant what Moore, in his reply, means by "ought-implying." Moore replied that x's being intrinsically good may synthetically but necessarily imply that x ought to be brought into being, and that, if this is so, then one can say, even if intrinsic goodness is a simple intrinsic quality, that it is as such, essentially, or by nature normative. This is true, if one is willing to admit that there are synthetic a priori connections between properties, as I was at the time. What I meant to say, and should have said more clearly than I did, is that, if intrinsic goodness is a simple and/or an intrinsic

quality, then it cannot be analytically or by definition ought-implicating, as Moore seemed sometimes to think, and that, if it is not analytically ought-implicating, then it is not plausible to define "ought" in terms of "conduciveness to what is intrinsically good," as Moore did in *Principia Ethica*. To answer that intrinsic goodness may still be ought-implicating in a synthetic necessary way, however, is to give up that definition of "ought," as I was contending Moore should. It is, in fact, to move to the position he took in *Ethics* and later writings, including his reply to me.

As for this later position, my main contention was that, if it is true, i.e., if intrinsic goodness is not analytically ought-implicating, then there is no very good reason for regarding it as indefinable or non-natural. In his reply Moore gave an argument to show that there is good reason for so regarding it after all; this argument I discuss in the fourth paper included in this volume.

I went on to suggest that two intuitionist positions are more plausible than either of Moore's two: (a) one that defines "good" in terms of "ought" or "fitting," and (b) one that combines an intuitionist view of "ought" with a naturalist view of "good." (a) represents the line taken by Ewing, (b) the line I was inclined to favor.

The next two papers belong together. In both I was trying to defend line (b) by rebutting a number of intuitionist arguments against naturalistic theories of value, including Ewing's. In both the sort of naturalistic theory of value I had in mind was that of Lewis in *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*. Actually, I drew some support for my lingering intuitionism about obligation from Lewis too (as well as from Ewing), for, though he was not an intuitionist about it, he seemed not to be a naturalist about it either. Later I dealt with the problem of interpreting Lewis's views in some papers not included here.<sup>3</sup> Among the arguments I discuss is the open question argument, which was used by emotivists and non-cognitivists, as well as by intuitionists. One point must be added to my discussion of Moore's argument in the second of these two papers, viz., that his premise (4) would be denied by most, if not all, deontologists.

In all of the papers included from this period, I talk as if the questions at issue between naturalists and their opponents can be settled by a kind of "inspection" of our meanings. I now believe that this talk is too simple-minded, as some of the later essays will bring out.<sup>4</sup>

## II

The next ten years (the fifties) constitute a transitional period. It begins with a fussy paper on "Obligation and Ability" (1950) that still seems to me to make some points, as do two papers on human and natural rights. It includes essays on the metaethics of Francis Hutcheson, R. W. Sellars, and Broad, and two chapters in a book on the philosophy of language. In the course of writing these pieces, I began to see the possibility of a non-cognitivist theory different from those of A. J. Ayer, C. L. Stevenson, or R. M. Hare. None of these papers are included here. Perhaps the most important paper of this period not included is "Moral Philosophy at Mid-Century" (1951). In it I still saw the alternatives in metaethics as intuitionism, naturalism

and non-cognitivism, though I suggested there might be a fourth alternative. I contended that none of the three positions had been shown to be untenable, that all should be taken seriously, and that none can be regarded as a mere elucidation of our ordinary thinking and discourse. I also discerned changing conceptions of analysis, argued that analysis in the old sense is not enough to settle metaethical issues, and made some suggestions about the doing of metaethics—all points that are reflected in other papers appearing in this volume. I even proposed that moral philosophers should do normative ethics—which they have since begun to do in a gratifying way.

During this decade, I became increasingly dubious about the epistemology and ontology of intuitionism as I understood it, and also increasingly concerned about and interested in emotivism and other alternatives to both naturalism and intuitionism. I wanted a single metaethical theory that would cover both the right and the good in place of the dualistic one I had been holding, but one which would retain what seemed to me sound in cognitivism and intuitionism. With this went a growing concern about the definition of the concept of morality. I was also beginning to extend my work in ethical theory to include the philosophy of education, mainly as a result of thinking about the teaching of religion in state universities and, of course, about moral education.

"Ethical Naturalism Renovated" (1957) is a critical review of some aspects of P. B. Rice's *On the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. The movement to renovate naturalism was only beginning then, and this essay serves to call attention to a neglected moral philosopher who was something of a pioneer. Rice was one of the first to try to refurbish naturalism in ethics as an alternative, not only to intuitionism, but also and more especially to emotivism and "informalism," a term he used to cover S. E. Toulmin, P. H. Nowell-Smith, Hare, and other post-emotivistic anti-naturalists. The essay also formulated my reactions to Rice's proposed new form of naturalism about "ought" in its moral use (what he says about "good" I left to one side), which involves giving "x morally ought to do A" both a descriptive and a non-descriptive meaning. I wondered if it was really naturalism, and I questioned his account of the non-descriptive meaning of "ought." But I liked much of what he says about reasoning and justification in ethics, particularly his somewhat vague notion that a kind of moral point of view is central to it. I suggested, however, that all of what he says can be incorporated in a "monistic" form of non-cognitivism which takes the idea of a moral point of view as basic, a line of thought I was then finding in Hutcheson and Hume.<sup>5</sup> Very tentatively, I was considering the merits of such a metaethical theory.<sup>6</sup> This comes out somewhat in another paper, "Toward a Philosophy of Moral Education," written at about the same time. I should add that the business of validation and vindication was made much clearer by P. W. Taylor in *Normative Discourse* (1961).

"Obligation and Motivation in Moral Philosophy" (1958) was written at about this time, but in it my orientation was still rather cognitivist, if not intuitionist. I was trying to bring into the open an issue between "internalism" and "externalism" that cuts to some extent across the issues between intuitionists,

naturalists, and non-cognitivists, all by way of a discussion of certain arguments about obligation used by a variety of writers, mainly as ways of refuting intuitionism (which is a form of externalism). Today I do not find myself thinking very much in terms of an internalism versus externalism controversy, but I believe that most of my points against such arguments still hold. In fact, I still think that externalism contains an essential truth, namely, that the question whether or not *x* ought (morally) to do *A* is not to be answered by looking to see what his motivations are. About this the intuitionists—and Rice too—were right (on another item Rice himself was too close to the internalists, as I pointed out). On the other hand, I have come to believe that the emotivists were correct in thinking that, when one judges that *x* ought to do *A*, one is necessarily taking a pro-attitude toward *x*'s doing *A*, at least *ceteris paribus*. In this sense, one cannot sensibly judge that one morally should do *A* and be entirely indifferent about doing it. To this extent I have moved toward internalism. Even so, as I try to show in the first three pages of Section XI, two alternatives remain: (a) a form of externalism that makes certain concessions and (b) a form of internalism that is there described. My own drift has been toward the latter position, but I am not sure that it matters greatly which alternative one espouses, as long as one recognizes that the reasons counting as justifying a moral judgment are not facts about the agent's motivation and that the judgment itself claims the agreement of all who are rational and take the moral point of view.

### III

My writing during the sixties was rather more varied than before. A good bit of it was historical, including a longish review of ethical theory in America from 1930 to 1960. Even more of it was in the philosophy of education, moral and non-moral, including a small book on Aristotle, Kant, and Dewey that contains accounts of their ethical as well as of their educational theories. In another little book, *Ethics* (1963, second edition in 1973), I finally worked out, in an elementary version, the outlines of an ethical theory, both normative and metaethical. It is still the fullest and only systematic statement there is of my moral philosophy as a whole. In metaethics I am no longer an intuitionist or a naturalist about either "good" or "ought," but a non-cognitivist of the postemotivist sort indicated above. It is here that I use against naturalism the point mentioned earlier in discussing "The NF."<sup>7</sup> In normative ethics I argue for a mixed deontological view that takes as basic in morality a principle of beneficence (or, roughly, utility) and a principle of justice (or equal treatment).

Several times during the first half of this decade I wrote pieces about Christian ethics and about the relation of morality to religion, most of them partly sympathetic and partly critical. These include "Public Education and the Good Life" (1961) and "Is Morality Logically Dependent on Religion?" although the latter was not published until 1973. The only one of these essays reprinted here is "Love and Principle in Christian Ethics" (1964), which appeared in a *Festschrift* for my first teacher in philosophy and has had a gratifying reception among moral theologians. It

does not seem to me to need further comment on this occasion. In general, in these papers, I was seeking to be helpful to religious "ethicists" (their label, which I abhor) but at the same time to resist their tendency to make morality dependent on, or even to turn it into, religion.

Three times I tried my hand on the subject of justice, and the last of these attempts (1966) is reprinted in this volume. The position taken in it is the same as that taken in *Ethics* (though it is considerably restated), but it is different from the more complicated view presented in "The Concept of Social Justice" (1962), being limited to distributive justice. One paragraph strikes me now as confused, though no doubt other criticisms may also be made both of this essay and of my other things on justice. In the first paragraph of Section VI I talk as if differences in ability or need between people may sometimes justify treating them *unequally* as well as *differently*, but this is inconsistent with what I argued earlier. I do not want to say that differences between people ever directly justify treating them *unequally*, though they may so justify treating them *differently*. But I do hold that treating them *unequally* is sometimes justified (and perhaps even "justicized," to borrow a concept from my 1962 essay), not by differences between the individuals involved, but by the consequences in terms of the long-run achievement of equality in society. A temporary college policy of preferential admission for minorities may be an example.

One of my preoccupations at this time was with a question that was then coming to the fore in metaethics—the question of the nature of morality. It seemed to me important to define morality, to distinguish between it and other things, and especially to distinguish between moral judgments and other kinds of judgments that use evaluative or normative terms like "good," "right," "should," etc.; and I thought that intuitionists, naturalists, emotivists, and even prescriptivists, had not paid enough attention to such matters. It also seemed to me that the best way to distinguish a moral judgment from a non-moral normative one is not by the normative terms used, by the subject being judged, by the feelings accompanying the judgment, or by any purely "formal" criteria, but by the nature of the reasons that are given for it or would be given for it if it is questioned. One can also put this by saying that moral judgments are to be distinguished from other normative ones by the point of view that is being taken and that the moral point of view (MPV) can be distinguished from other normative points of view by the kinds of considerations it takes account of. This, however, is a view that has been much debated since it was espoused by Toulmin, Kurt Baier, Rice, Philippa Foot, etc. Several of my essays represent contributions to this debate. In 1958 I defended the idea of defining morality against Alasdair MacIntyre's attack on it. In "Recent Conceptions of Morality" (1963) I tried to bring the debate more fully into the open and to say something about its nature and participants. In still other essays I sought to state and defend the "material" kind of definition of morality and the MPV that seems to me most satisfactory.

Two of these later essays unfortunately, because of an unexpected conjunction of circumstances, have the same title, "The Concept of Morality"; what is worse, they embody rather



different views, since I changed my mind in the interim; and what is worst, the later one, which represents my present position, came out first. It is the later one that is reprinted here. The other is included in *The Definition of Morality* (1970), edited by G. Wallace and A. D. M. Walker,<sup>8</sup> except that it is mistaken on the point in which the two papers differ, it represents my thinking somewhat more fully than the present one does. A later article on the same topic is also included here and will be noticed shortly.

"On Saying the Ethical Thing" (also 1966) was a presidential address to the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association, and it contains some of the rhetoric and attempted humor that used to grace such occasions. In it I plump for a normative conception of metaethics and seek to restate the controversy between intuitionism, naturalism, and non-cognitivism accordingly, using the idea that human discourse contains three Voices. Talking in those terms, I try to formulate a fourth kind of theory of the sort indicated earlier, which may be a kind of naturalism but which I prefer to think of as a somewhat novel kind of non-descriptivism variously anticipated by Hume, Ewing, J. N. Findlay, and Taylor, one which combines what is true in internalism and externalism. I also touch on topics dealt with in earlier and later essays: the NF, the MPV, the relation of Is and Ought, and relativism.

One of these topics, also dealt with in "The NF," in *Ethics*, and in other papers not included here, is taken up in "'Ought' and 'Is' Once More" (1969). I was tempted to entitle it "'Ought' and 'Is' Once More and for the Last Time," but decided that neither others nor even I myself were likely to leave that delicious subject alone. This was fortunate, for W. D. Hudson's *The Is/Ought Question* came out soon afterwards—and I returned to the topic recently in an essay on Spinoza. In any event, in the present paper, against the background of the general metaethical theory I had arrived at, I state the three usual views about the business of going from Is to Ought (roughly, naturalism or descriptivism, intuitionism, and the usual kind of non-cognitivism), and then argue for a fourth, viz., that, although one cannot in strict logic go from Ises to an Ought in any important sense, it may still sometimes be rational to do so and irrational not to. This position I later illustrated and, I hope, reinforced in the paper on Spinoza just referred to. Incidentally, I should note that I here again correct the interpretation of Hume and Mill used in "The NF," as I already had in *Ethics*.

#### IV

Some pieces in the philosophy of education, all written in the late sixties, have appeared in the present decade. My main concern, however, has been with questions about the nature of morality and, especially, about the forms it may or should take—what I call metamoral problems (rather than metaethical ones). The latter interest comes out in "The Principles and Categories of Morality" (1970) in which, partly by way of a defense of my principles of beneficence and justice, I argue that morality should recognize five deontic categories instead of the usual three (obligatory, permitted, and wrong). It also shows up in the next essay reprinted here, "Prichard and the Ethics of Virtue" (1970),

where I raise a related question: whether aretaic or deontic concepts and judgments are or should be basic in morality? In particular, I am there exploring the question of an ethics of virtue, which has intrigued me ever since I wrote *Ethics* in 1963, where I dismissed it rather cavalierly (I do somewhat better by it in the second edition). The same interest led me to write "The Ethics of Love Conceived as an Ethics of Virtue" (1973, but not here), which also reflects my continuing attention to Christian ethics. My latest thoughts on the ethics of virtue—and on the relations of morality as I conceive of it to religion—may be found in "Conversations with Carney and Hauerwas" (1975, and also not here).

With an interest in the forms of morality naturally goes an interest in the forms of moral education; as Michael Oakeshott says, "Every form of the moral life . . . depends upon [a form of moral] education."<sup>9</sup> In an encyclopedia article here reprinted, "Moral Education" (1971), I describe and discuss some views about the form moral education should take. Other discussions of moral education occur in an earlier article already referred to, in "Public Education and the Good Life" (1961), and in "Moral Authority, Moral Autonomy, and Moral Education," which will appear in the near future.

In "On Defining Moral Judgments, Principles, and Codes" (1973) I am again on the problem of distinguishing moral judgments, etc., from non-moral ones. Besides reviewing alternative answers to this problem, I endeavor here to explain, complete, and defend the answer given earlier in "The Concept of Morality."

The next essay, "the principles of morality" (1973), was written about 1966. By way of a discussion of a number of views about what is or should be meant when we say "P is a principle of morality" or "The principles of morality require . . .," I expound and support the kind of objectivism in ethics that is part of the metaethical theory the evolution of which I have been trying to sketch. In a way, it represents an attempt to preserve what now still seems to me correct in intuitionism, without the epistemology and ontology that went with it in Price, Sidgwick, Moore, H. A. Prichard, or W. D. Ross—in fact, within a non-cognitivist framework of sorts. This attempt has close affinities with the views of Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith, Findlay (in 1944), and Baier, and perhaps some with those of Ewing (in his *Second Thoughts*), Kai Nielsen, and John Rawls.

Another metamoral problem is that raised by asking, "Why should one be moral, take the MPV, etc.?" In "Sidgwick and the Dualism of Practical Reason" (1974), I show how Sidgwick wrestled with this problem and assess his solution. I myself take the same line adopted at the end of *Ethics*, but here, as also in "Conversations with Carney and Hauerwas," I follow Sidgwick in thinking that such an answer involves a postulate about man and the world—essentially the same postulate I make use of earlier in a somewhat different connection in "The Concept of Morality" (both versions).

Most recently, for those who are interested, I have been occupied with these and other metamoral questions, e.g., whether morality has or should have an object, whether it is or should be a system of hypothetical imperatives, whether it may or should

take the form of a positive social morality or be regarded as a wholly private, personal matter, whether the basic principles of morality should be taken as action-guides for individuals or as principles for institutions, and whether morality should subscribe to the so-called doctrine of double effect. Like many other recent moral philosophers, however, I have also been reflecting on some of the current problems of normative ethics: the ethics of respect for life, the problem of world hunger, etc. Some fruits of these reflections have appeared and, hopefully, more will appear shortly.

William K. Frankena  
Roy Wood Sellars Professor of Philosophy  
The University of Michigan

Notes:

1. See his "Moral and Non-Moral Values," *Mind*, 44 (1935).
2. For Moore's reply see P.A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore* (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1942).
3. For these and other papers referred to in this postscript, but not reprinted here, see the bibliography included in this volume.
4. See e.g., note 42, "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy."
5. See "Hutcheson's Moral Sense Theory," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 16 (1955).
6. See "Ethics, 1949-1955," in R. Klipansky (ed.), *Philosophy in the Mid-Century* (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1958), pp. 67f.
7. See second edition (1973), pp. 100f.
8. So is my reply to MacIntyre, referred to earlier.
9. *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen and Co., 1962), p. 62.

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## W. K. FRANKENA AND ETHICS OF VIRTUE\*

William Frankena has several times discussed,<sup>1</sup> in his usual cautious and judicious manner, a contrast between two types of normative ethics: an ethics of "duty" and an ethics of "virtue." Without claiming that actual philosophers have been pure exemplars of either type, he has tried to give a clear statement of these two possible and contrasting types of theory, and to expose their problems. His final view seems to be that a complete normative theory will combine elements of both, but that an ethics of "duty" in some sense is more fundamental. Plato and Aristotle seem to differ from him in being more sympathetic to a "virtue-ethics." Leslie Stephen went so far as to claim that satisfactory principles of duty cannot even be stated and that a moral philosopher spends his time better formulating an ideal of virtue. James Martineau is another classical figure more sympathetic to "virtue ethics."

I agree with Frankena that a complete normative theory

must have elements of both types of view, but I think it is the virtue-ethics that is more fundamental. In what follows I shall formulate what I think are the main issues, but with special emphasis on Frankena's views which I shall assess, sometimes amplify, sometimes criticize.

### 1. What is an Ethics of Virtue?

We should obviously begin by identifying the theory we are trying to appraise. I propose to follow Frankena in his definition.

First of all, an ethics of virtue is an *aretaic* ethics: a species of this. A philosopher is to be described as holding an *aretaic* ethics if he holds that aretaic "terms and judgments" are "sufficient, or at least . . . basic, and deontic ones . . . inappropriate, unnecessary, or at least . . . derivative" (whereas one is classified as a deontic moralist if he holds the reverse). Deontic ethical terms include "right," "wrong," "duty," "obligation," and "ought," whereas aretaic terms include "morally good," "morally bad," "virtuous," and "vicious."<sup>2</sup> How do the terms differ? Frankena says the aretaic terms are scalar, the deontic ones not.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the former are properly applied only to persons, motives, concrete actions, intentions, and traits of character (Ross speaks of the last as the "grand bearer" of moral goodness).<sup>4</sup> They are not used to judge of classes of acts (adultery, theft) that they are or tend to be wrong or ought to be done. Examples of aretaic judgments are: "Grandfather was just good," and "Honesty is a virtue," and "Be honest!" (Frankena regards the injunction "Be honest!" as essentially the same as the statement, "Honesty is a virtue" or "Honesty is morally good.")<sup>5</sup>

The claim of the proponent of aretaic ethics is that statements in which aretaic terms are the only ethical terms say all there is to say by way of ethical appraisal, or at least all that is important to say; or at least they are basic apparently in the sense that deontic judgments cannot reasonably be asserted except on the basis of reasonable assertion of aretaic statements, perhaps because deontic terms can be defined by means of aretaic terms but not the reverse. There seems to me to be some vagueness here about just what is being claimed, and we shall be exploring this relationship as we go on.

What specific form of aretaic ethics is a virtue-ethics? A philosopher who holds a virtue-ethics first of all agrees with the aretaic-philosopher about the status of aretaic concepts and judgments in ethics. But, according to Frankena, this theory also holds that what is "basic is one or more aretaic judgments or principles like 'Be V' or rather 'V is a virtue' or 'V is a morally good disposition . . .'" It differs from nonvirtue types of aretaic ethics in that the virtue-philosopher holds that "What is basic in ethics is not something about actions or doing, but something about agents and their being-dispositions, motives, or character traits. In Stephen's terms its basic instruction is not 'Do the loving act' but 'Be loving.'" According to Frankena, this view is "aretaic agent-ethics" and it views the other kinds of aretaic judgments and deontic judgments as "secondary, otiose, or out of place."<sup>6</sup>

It should be noticed that if "virtue" can be defined as a trait of character that is *good* in some sense, maybe morally good, then

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the only basic *ethical* predicate of a virtue-ethics is “good” in some sense, maybe “morally good.”

What might be meant by saying that these types of judgment are “basic”? I suggest that what must be meant is that judgments about *types* of motives, traits, etc., are basic in two ways. First, what it is for a *particular action* to be morally bad (etc.), is for it to manifest some defective *trait of character*; hence we can know which particular actions are objectionable only if we already know which traits are morally defective. Second—although this is much the same point—judgments about types of motives, traits, etc., are more basic epistemologically, in that we have good reason to think that certain types of traits (etc.), are defective or bad without antecedent knowledge of which specific actions are bad, whereas we do not have good reasons for thinking specific actions are good or bad except by knowing whether they exemplify traits (types of motive, etc.), antecedently known to be good or bad. We recall that both Plato and Aristotle thought one can employ a “functional” argument to show that certain traits of character are good; thus we can establish something about the goodness of traits in this direct way. Most philosophers today would be skeptical about such a functional argument; but I myself think there is an argument which can establish the same sort of result—to the effect that fully rational persons would want certain traits of character developed, by education, in a society in which they expected to live. That would be a general argument establishing the status of certain traits. A virtue-ethics need not hold that principles like “Honesty is a virtue” are absolutely the end of the line from the point of view of epistemology; it need not deny that such principles can be rationally supported or that they need such support. It only asserts that these principles about types of motive, traits, etc., are *relatively basic*, as compared with judgments about particular actions. Of course, a critic of virtue-ethics could hold that we first know about the moral quality of specific actions, and can then proceed, by induction, to generalizations about types of motive or trait. A virtue-ethics would deny this. Thus, to put it in Frankena’s terms, it affirms “not only that *aretaic* judgments are primary in morality, but also that *aretaic* judgments about agents and/or their motives or traits are prior to *aretaic* judgments about actions.”

Unfortunately matters are complicated by the fact that we have to distinguish *two types* of virtue-ethics, indeed two types of *aretaic* ethics, one of which makes use of the concept of the *morally good*, and the other the concept of the *nonmorally good*. Both these notions need explanation, which they will get in due course.

In what follows, I shall say surprisingly little about the merits of virtue as opposed to *aretaic* ethics in general. Partly this is because Frankena mostly ignores the issue. Partly it is because I have argued elsewhere (*Ethical Theory*, Chapter 18) that the concept of virtue is prior to the moral evaluation of particular actions; and I have also argued (*A Theory of the Good and the Right*, chapters 10, 11, 15) that a general argument can be adduced to support evaluations of virtues but not of particular actions. Frankena’s arguments are mostly directed to the issue between *aretaic* and deontic types of ethical theory; he holds, I

think, that deontic concepts are necessary and indefinable in terms of *aretaic* ones, and that deontic judgments are epistemologically prior. I shall assess these arguments. For the most part, however, the discussion which follows will be concerned with conceptual ground-clearing. Incidentally, in the following discussion of an *aretaic* ethics making use of the concept of the nonmorally good, I have had in mind the conceptual framework for ethics which Professor Anscombe (and others before her, e.g., Victor Brochard in *Revue Philosophique* for 1901) has suggested the Greeks and other rational persons might utilize, if they abandoned theological ethics. Now for the preliminary ground-clearing.

*The nature of traits of character.* It would be mostly agreed, I think, that virtues are a species of traits of character, or at least of *action-explaining* traits. There is disagreement what kind of things such traits are. I am going to rely on a view I suggested some years ago, which I have seen no good reason to abandon.<sup>7</sup> Essentially, the idea was that any statement assigning a character-trait (generosity) to someone can be unpacked as some statement ascribing some *intrinsic desire/aversion* (intrinsic in the sense of being a desire/aversion at least partly for no further reason, not derivative from some other desire/aversion) or pattern of desires/aversions, of a *stable* sort to a person, one he has in any *normal* state of mind, and up to a *certain standard level*. On this view, a trait of character is a psychological entity which can play an important role in a belief-desire explanation of action. There are philosophers, however, who think that not all traits can be explicated in this way, in terms of desires/aversions.

Frankena seems to hold that the desire/aversion proposal is part of the truth. He says that virtues involve a tendency “to think or feel in certain ways,” which is consistent with thinking that virtues are desires/aversions (if I am averse to others being hurt, I shall feel disturbed if I observe someone being hurt—this is part of the syndrome of having an aversion), but may be intended to add something. When he is talking of the virtue of love, he suggests it may be a “straightout desire or concern for the good of others as such,” which sounds like sympathy for the desire/aversion theory. At other places, however, he seems to take a somewhat different line, when he says that virtues all “involve a tendency to do certain kinds of action”—what is compatible with a view developed by W. P. Alston (who seems to have influenced him), the view that a trait is a disposition for a relatively specific type of behavior to occur.<sup>8</sup> Frankena also suggests it may include a cognitive ability, to see what is morally good or right or what the facts are, free of the obscuring effects of desires.<sup>9</sup> Frankena, by the way, does not subscribe to the thesis put forward by H. A. Prichard in a well-known article,<sup>10</sup> to the effect that conscientiousness is a motive but not a desire, although he points out that it is different from virtues like benevolence, justice, or fidelity; he calls it a second-order desire, like courage and a desire to get the facts, on account of its abstractness and generality, its not being a desire for any specific kind of situation but rather a desire to do whatever is right and avoid whatever is wrong.”<sup>11</sup>

*Action-explaining traits and conscientious commitments.* If we accept something like the above as at least a partial account of a “virtue,” then there is *some* connection between *some* virtues

and a person's "belief in deontic principles"—at least there is if one takes a motivational view of the latter concept, as Frankena and many others are inclined to do. For what is it to have a *conscientious objection*, say, to breach of promise to think breach of promise is *prima facie* wrong? I have suggested elsewhere<sup>12</sup> that it is in part (1) to have an *aversion* to breaking promises one's self, for no further reason; (2) to tend to feel guilty if one reflects that one has broken a promise, unless one thinks there is justification or excuse; and (3) to tend to disapprove of others one thinks have broken a promise, unless one thinks they had justification or excuse. In addition, one believes that these attitudes on one's part are justified in some appropriate sense. The same, of course, for subscription to all moral principles.

Frankena's conception of conscientious commitment is similar, but also in some important ways different. In his view, "Doing *A* is morally obligatory" expresses a person's favoring the doing of *A*. Further, the use of this moral language expresses willingness to favor doing *A* in all similar cases. Again, use of moral language implies that one thinks all other persons informed and taking the moral point of view will share one's attitude of favoring. Finally, use of moral language makes the claim that the favoring attitude toward doing *A* is taken from the moral point of view, which implies that the attitude is at least partly based on, or could be based on, reflections about the actual/probable effects of the action *A*, on the promotion or distribution of nonmoral good and evil<sup>13</sup>—a view which seems to read a substantive normative thesis into the analysis of ethical language. Frankena apparently does *not* intend the attitude of "favoring *A*" to include being disposed to feel guilty if one fails to do *A* one's self, or to have some anti-attitude (e.g., retributive indignation) toward others who fail to do *A* (when there is no justification or excuse). As a result, it looks as if thinking one is morally obligated to do *A* is only recommending *A* from the moral point of view and thinking others will agree—an account which to my mind is not obviously adequate. I shall in effect be returning to this.

Suppose we adopt either one of these motivational accounts of conscientious commitment to a moral principle, say to holding that breach of promise is *prima facie* wrong. Does a person who thinks it wrong to break a promise in this sense have the trait of honesty? He is somewhere on the road to being honest, but he need not be quite there. For he can properly say he thinks breach of promise wrong, even if the attitude expressed is rather weak—when the degree of aversion does not come up to the "standard" level required for the appellation of "honest." Conversely, a man may be honest but be without a full conscientious commitment. For he need not have the dispositions to feel guilty or disapprove of others in the relevant circumstances; and he need not think his attitude would be shared by others who take the moral point of view, or even that his own attitude is taken from the moral point of view, and so on. (Matters are more complex on an intellectualist view of moral judgments, such as nonnaturalistic intuitionism or empiricist or supernaturalist definisms, although there will usually be some approximation to the above view, since it is usually thought that some *attitudes* toward actions of a certain kind will necessarily be associated with the moral belief about it.)

There are, incidentally, possible exceptions even to this

loose connection; for possibly some traits of character (e.g., if industry or persistence or prudence is among them) have nothing at all to do with conscientious commitments to moral principles.

*Virtues as guides of behavior and a necessary complication.* Since virtues include motivation—desires/aversions directed at some outcome or some behavior type—they function to guide behavior just as conscientious commitments do. Let us look at the parallel.

Let us begin with a simple case. Suppose a person has only one moral principle, say the principle of act-utilitarianism, so that his moral motivation disposes him, according to its strength, to do what he thinks will maximize happiness. Correspondingly, let us consider a person with just one virtue, say benevolence or Christian love. Since benevolence consists in sympathetic concern for sentient beings (or sympathetic aversion to their illfare), the virtue of benevolence will guide behavior, in the direction of the action the person thinks will maximize happiness, overpowering other conflicting desires corresponding to its strength. In this case, then, a virtue of love would be action-directing just in the way as would commitment to the principle of act-utilitarianism.

Let us now look at the more complex case, of a person with numerous moral principles (e.g., one to relieve distress, another to keep promises, etc.), or a person with several virtues, say both benevolence and fidelity. In what ways will these direct conduct? Suppose a concrete case engages at least two conflicting moral principles (or virtues), which give conflicting directions. The situation, of course, is the one Ross has made familiar by his talk of conflicting *prima facie* self-evident principles, and the necessity of relying on "intuition" to resolve conflicts between them. On the motivational view of moral commitments, as sketched above, the possibility of direction of behavior by conscientious commitments arises from the fact that these commitments will normally be of different degrees of strength; and we shall perform the act which is seen to lead to the set of outcomes which in fact we most strongly want. (For simplicity I omit the fact that the force of a given outcome will depend partly on the subjective probability of the desired state of affairs occurring if the action is taken.) Moreover, the commitments can be, and are, taught so as to vary in a subtle way, depending on the kind of situation: there are all sorts of promises, old and new ones, solemn and casual ones, ones the discharge of which is important to the promisee, others not. So, in a given situation, as envisaged by the agent, a person's moral commitments will cast their weight in a given direction, to do battle with his contending nonmoral desires.

The situation will be roughly the same for guidance by virtues, assuming that virtues all involve some desire or complex of desires. (It will not make much difference if we add other dispositional elements.) But, if the guidance is to be similar, we must make one very important assumption: that virtues are much more numerous, and more delicately honed, than has traditionally been emphasized. If we think of a virtue in the traditional way, e.g., the virtue of honesty being just an aversion to say breach of promise up to a "standard" level, then it will not be nearly enough delicately refined to provide the guidance wanted for concrete situations. Will the virtue of honesty (or fidelity), for

instance, make a distinction between the various kinds of promise: new and old, solemn and casual, etc.? In order to do the job done by our conscientious commitments, we need a whole flock of different desires/aversions, all delicately tuned, so that their conjoint action will bring us out where a rational person would want us trained to come out. We shall not get this complicated set of virtues just by enjoining people to be honest, truthful, generous, and so on: something vastly more subtle is required. But, if we complicate the conception of virtues, and the teaching of virtues, in the required way, then we can think of a whole set of virtues as guiding behavior much as do moral principles. Leslie Stephen, who held an ethics of virtue of a sort, seems to have overlooked, or been confused about, this point;<sup>14</sup> but we find this view roughly forecast in a striking statement by W. D. Ross in 1939:<sup>15</sup>

An action will be completely good only if it manifests the whole range of motivation by which an ideally good man would be affected in the circumstances, a sensitiveness to every result for good or for evil that the act is foreseen as likely to have, as well as to any special *prima facie* obligations or disobligations that may be involved; and only if it manifests sensitiveness to all these considerations in their right proportions. But if the agent is responsive to all the morally relevant considerations in their right proportions, he will in fact do the *right* act. Thus no action will have the utmost moral excellence which an action in the circumstances can have, unless it is also the right action.

A fully virtuous person, in the sense of one having that finely-tuned set of virtues of the sort Ross had in mind, would have such a complicated interrelated set of desires/aversions that it would make some sense to say that there is really only one complex organic virtue.

These reflections suggest that the doctrine of "cardinal" virtues is very much oversimplified, at least if it means that there are some virtues which we can name such that, when factual data are added as premises, one can derive from the concept of them all the other virtues. Suppose we start with the traditional group: wisdom (prudence?), courage, temperance, and justice. How will we derive fidelity or benevolence from these, not to mention the precise intensity of each for various circumstances, which we have seen is needed? Prospects are better if we choose benevolence as our sole cardinal virtue (or perhaps go along with Frankena and add justice, although the addition makes for problems). For then we can ask, and answer, the question which degree (etc.), of which other virtues would, everything considered, yield the outcome the benevolent man is after. Incidentally, the answer might be that some virtues, such as fidelity, should be built in with a strength so as to prevail over benevolence in some circumstances; that is the price of having a *policy* in effect.

Frankena rightly points out that the major normative theories in ethics imply positions about which virtues it is correct to have, corresponding to positions about which conscientious commitments it is correct to have. Thus trait-egoism, trait-utilitarianisms (both act and rule and other types), and trait-deontology will all be theories about which virtues it is correct to have, or when actions will manifest perfect virtue.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. *Virtue<sub>M</sub>* and the Concept of the Morally Good

I have suggested that virtues are action-explaining traits (have sometimes said "traits of character"). But what further feature is required for such a trait to be a virtue (or vice)? There must be one, since some action-explaining traits like ambition, industry, and curiosity, which have all the features mentioned earlier as essential for traits of character (stability and relative permanence in normal frames of mind, being intrinsic desires), would hardly be called virtues, at least *moral* ones.

Frankena rightly proposes that there are at least two plausible distinct answers to this question: one is that a virtue is a trait it is *morally* good to have (or else, I would add, morally bad to be without); the other is that a virtue is a trait it is *nonmorally* good to have. I shall develop the latter conception later. Our first type of virtue-ethics, then, uses the predicate "is a virtue<sub>M</sub>," meaning "is a character-trait that is *morally* good." So construed, the basic ethical predicate of this kind of virtue-ethics "is morally good." But what is it to be *morally* good?

Some writers seem very comfortable with this term and think its sense needs no discussion. Others are not. C. I. Lewis even suggests that those who use it are probably confused.<sup>17</sup> The term "morally good" ("bad") itself seems to have little use in ordinary speech. Terms which perform that role in ordinary speech, among those fit to print, include "indecent," "shocking," "disgusting," "contemptible," "cheap," "filthy," "monstrous," "immoral," "disgraceful," and "shameful." The reader is invited to consider what these terms have in common.<sup>18</sup>

What is Frankena's view of "is morally good (bad)"? His view is that *all* moral statements may be construed as expressions of attitude, with at least an implied claim that the attitude is taken from the "moral point of view" (it is directed towards actions, motives, or traits of character; one is willing to universalize it; one's reasons for it consist of beliefs about what its object will "do for the lives of sentient beings in terms of promoting or distributing nonmoral good and evil; and one is calm, fully informed, clear-headed, and impartial"),<sup>19</sup> and that anyone else who takes the moral point of view would share it. But *which* attitudes? Take "Dishonesty is morally bad." It is clear Frankena would say we are expressing disfavor of dishonesty. How does it differ from "Dishonesty is (nonmorally) *a bad thing*"? The difference is in that the latter term can be applied more widely, to states of affairs like pleasure and not merely to actions, motives, and traits; and it does not imply that the attitude expressed is taken from a moral point of view. But it is not obvious that this proposal is adequate. For consider traits like ambition, curiosity, enterprise, orderliness, self-reliance, and independence. One favors these traits, and it is plausible to suppose that one implies, if one calls them "good," that all others (who are informed, etc.) will agree; and it is plausible to suppose that the favorable evaluation of them is a result of the belief that their normal impact on the promotion or distribution of welfare is beneficial. (How much nicer the world would be if everyone were orderly!) So, it would seem that the favoring attitude is taken from the moral point of view. But would Frankena want to say they are *morally* good? At any rate I would not. (Again, it is unclear what difference there

is, according to his theory, aside from the types of objects to which they are properly applied, between "It is obligatory to . . ." and "That is morally good." We are expressing at least favoring in both cases, and it would seem that both attitudes might be taken from the moral point of view.) I suggest that some additions should be made to Frankena's analysis.

It seems we could extend Frankena's view, in a way consistent with the major outlines of his general theory and also in a way which is helpful, but exploiting a distinction which Mill makes when he is talking about the difference between moral obligation/wrong and expedience,<sup>20</sup> and which is consistent with suggestions by Hutcheson.<sup>21</sup> Mill says an action is *wrong* only if it is *desirable* that it be *punished* in some way, at least by the reprobation of public opinion or the agent's own pangs of conscience. We might adapt this and say that a trait is *morally bad* if and only if rational persons would support a system of conscientious commitments which would punish (perhaps only potentially, since an agent may not ever know about the attitudes of others) behavior springing from that trait by negative attitudes of others directed at the agent on account of his behavior (retributive anger, disgust, or contempt, all including a willingness to see him uncomfortable on account of his action) and by his own feelings of guilt or remorse (discomfort about one's own action not entirely dependent on reflections about the attitudes of others). If we define "is morally bad" in this way, how might we define "is morally good"? We might say that any trait the *absence* of which is morally bad, is morally good, provided it is understood that it may be morally bad to fail to have the trait with a strength up to a certain "standard" level. It is not clear, however, that we want to count such traits as really "morally good." Ross once suggested<sup>22</sup> that when something is morally good it is worthy of *admiration*, and if we take this seriously we may be in some doubt whether a standard level of honesty qualifies as morally good—why should it be admirable to be just honest? Self-sacrificing or heroic in deeds, yes, but just honest—unless the honesty be developed to a high degree? Let me speculate by again taking liberties with Mill, suggesting that a trait is *morally good* if and only if rational persons would support a society-wide system of attitudes, including conscientious commitments, which would *reward* behavior springing from that trait (potentially, as before) by the positive attitudes of others directed at the agent on account of his behavior (admiration or respect including a preference for the person being made better off on account of his action), and by the agent's own feelings of modest pride or satisfaction arising from reflection on his action. We might then infer that only favorable traits present in an unusual degree are morally good. If we say this, then evidently the notion of the morally bad is the more important one in ethics.

We can end, then, by saying that a  $\text{virtue}_M$  is a desire/aversion, relatively permanent in a person in normal states of mind, the presence of which is morally good or the absence of it morally bad. No deontic concepts are needed in this definition.

Could Frankena consistently accept this definition? He would want to remove the naturalistic talk of what rational persons would support in the informal system of social control which is morality. He might do this by saying "is morally bad"

*expresses favor for punishing* action springing from the trait judged, as suggested, and the same, *mutatis mutandis*, for "is morally good." In fact, I believe, he would not do this, wishing to keep all retributive elements out of the analysis of the central conceptions of ethics.

### 3. The Morally Bad and Moral Obligation

Let us now inquire whether "moral duty" can be defined plausibly in terms of "morally bad," either in my suggested (Millian) sense, or Frankena's sense, along with nonethical terms.

The basis for an optimistic prognosis on this is that it is generally agreed that if a person fails to do his moral duty, his act is reprehensible (some trait of character morally bad), unless he has an adequate *excuse*. Of course, "excuse" is a moral term, so if we are hoping to get a definition with "morally bad" as the only ethical term, it has to be eliminated. We can do this, I think, by the following explanation: "X has *no* excuse or justification for doing A if and only if he would not have done A if he had not had some defective (morally bad) trait of character." In view of this, we can try the following definition of "moral duty," not "prima facie moral duty" but "overall, everything considered, moral duty." Thus: "X has the moral duty to do A" is to mean "X's failure to do A would be conclusive evidence that some trait of his character is morally defective (morally bad), if all those circumstances were absent (e.g., factual ignorance, temporary insanity, overwhelming emotional stress, the belief that his moral duty is to do something else) which preclude a normal inference from action to desires/aversions (traits of character)." Then, of course, "X has *not* a moral duty to do A" would mean, "X's failure to do A would *not* be conclusive evidence . . ." and so on. Of course, it does not follow that if X does A, that is conclusive evidence that his character is not morally defective, since he may do A, say, out of malice.<sup>23</sup> Somewhat similar suggestions have been made by various philosophers, including Hutcheson,<sup>24</sup> James Martineau, and Wilfrid Sellars.<sup>25</sup>

If this is correct, then a normative system of "virtue-ethics," viz. one with the concept of  $\text{virtue}_M$  and/or of the morally bad but without deontic concepts like duty, *can* be functionally no different from a deontic normative system. Everything that can be said in a deontic system can be said, doubtless sometimes only in a cumbersome way, by one of the predicates of the virtue-ethics terminology. For instance, an English-speaking person who wanted to say "It is your moral obligation, everything considered, to do A" might say, to a person who lacked deontic language, "If you do not do A, in the absence of special circumstances precluding inferences from action to character, you will have shown yourself to be in some respect a vicious man." Aretaic terminology can serve to point out those actions which must be performed if one is to avoid the imputation of morally bad traits; and the deontic language does no more. Indeed, the absence of the aretaic-virtue terms would be more crippling than the absence of the deontic ones since the aretaic terms cannot be defined by the deontic ones, and the aretaic ones are necessary for an explanation of "moral excuse" or "responsibility," notions

important in both ethics and law.

Frankena's view is here the precise opposite of mine, for he thinks, on the one hand, that deontic terms cannot be defined by means of aretaic ones, and on the other hand he thinks that aretaic terms *can* be defined by means of deontic ones. (For a brief remark on the latter point, see the penultimate paragraph of this paper.) Frankena's fullest statement of his views is to be found in his CCH, pp. 50-51.

#### 4. Supererogation and the Morally Good

We have been considering whether "is your moral duty" or "it is morally wrong to do A" can be explained in terms of aretaic judgments, using the notions of the morally bad or of the vicious. Many philosophers at present are interested in a parallel problem, how to define "supererogatory acts." Let us now consider whether we can explain this concept plausibly by making use of the aretaic notion, "morally good" in a certain sense. The sense in question is the positive one, which implies of a trait said to be morally good that it is a trait the expression of which in behavior would be rewarded, in a moral system rational persons would support, by the positive attitudes of others and the agent's own feelings of modest pride or satisfaction.

We must first ask why there is a use for this second, more positive, sense of "morally good," or, more trenchantly, we might ask why rational persons would support a social system in which behavior manifesting certain traits would be rewarded.

The answer is that there are certain traits so essential for decent social life together as to be socially *required*; they are the ones the absence of which is morally bad, and is punished as sketched earlier. There are certain other traits (sometimes merely the required ones but raised to an intensity which is not required) which it is good for at least some to have, but which it would be impossible, or at least very costly in terms of time and effort, to produce in everyone, so much so that a long-term cost-benefit analysis could not justify, at least to a utilitarian, a serious attempt to institute such desires/aversions universally. But to say that a cost-benefit analysis would not justify a serious attempt to institute these traits universally, is not to say that such an analysis might not justify steps to *encourage* these traits, say among persons whose natural dispositions make them fertile soil for such encouragement. It would be senseless to try to make everyone a St. Francis or a Regulus, but it is not costly for people to express admiration for the deeds of others and to praise them or even give them medals, and it is not costly for people to feel good about some action of their own which benefits society but which goes beyond what it is necessary to require of everyone. There is, indeed, one cost: that of teaching people to recognize the rare, difficult, and socially beneficial traits of character. If people recognize such things, presumably they will admire them without special training (just as a tennis player will admire the skillful shots of a better player). And perhaps some teaching must be done to induce people to express the admiration which they feel. But if these things are done agents will recognize these traits in themselves, and they will presumably need no coaching in order to feel good about what they do, and about themselves. All

this, in view of the small cost and not insignificant social benefits, a rational person would support in a moral code. So there is, in our own moral code if not in all codes, as a rational person would choose that there be, both admiration and proper pride directed at persons on account of their rare and socially beneficial traits. So there is a use for "morally good" in the positive sense.<sup>26</sup>

We can then define "supererogatory act" as follows: "X's doing A is supererogatory" is to mean "X's doing A would be conclusive evidence that some trait of his character is morally good (superior), if all those circumstances were absent (e.g., factual ignorance, temporary insanity, emotional stress, the belief that doing A was his moral duty) which preclude a normal inference from action to traits of character."

#### 5. An Ethics of Nonmoral Virtue: The Concept of Virtue<sub>NM</sub>

I have already alluded to the possibility of another type of virtue-ethics: a normative system whose basic predicates are "is a good thing" but not "a *morally* good thing", and "is a *nonmoral virtue*" (a virtue<sub>NM</sub>) but not "a virtue<sub>M</sub>." It is clear such a theory is a logical possibility: a person might think traits of character good but not morally good in either my Millian sense or in Frankena's sense; and he might have in mind a corresponding notion of virtue, as a trait of character which is good but not morally good in one of these senses. At one point Frankena suggests a person might interpret "Be loving!" like this:<sup>27</sup>

Love and love alone is intrinsically good, good as an end, etc. Love and love alone is good as a means—to happiness, self-realization, salvation, etc. The loving man and only the loving man will 'flourish' *qua* man. Love and love alone is truly beautiful.

Frankena comments that "to take this line is to make a nonmoral judgment basic in morality, which is paradoxical to say the least. To me, at any rate, it seems clear that the basic element in a morality must be a moral judgment." We should note, however, that such a linguistic framework might be adequate to express all that some people (e.g., the Navaho?) might want to say, although it may not be adequate to express what we want to say or what persons would want to say who had the kind of moral system a rational person would want for his society.

We should remind ourselves what linguistic framework a pure ethics of virtue<sub>NM</sub> would have at its disposal. The frame, of course, will not contain deontic terms; neither will it contain the aretaic term "morally good" in my Millian sense or in Frankena's sense; nor will it contain "is a virtue<sub>M</sub>." Its basic predicates will be "is good" (in a sense we must consider) and "is a virtue<sub>NM</sub>" and it will apply these to agents, types of motive, traits, and types of character, but not to individual actions. In effect it can make recommendations like "Be virtuous<sub>NM</sub>," "Honesty is a virtue<sub>NM</sub>," "Honesty is good."

In this type of linguistic framework, what will "is a virtue<sub>NM</sub>" mean? It will mean that whatever the expression applies to is an action-explaining trait which is relatively stable at least in normal frames of mind, and an intrinsic desire/aversion; moreover, it implies that the subject of which it is predicated is a good thing—not necessarily a morally good thing, either in my sense or in

Frankena's sense. In what sense a "good thing"? I suggest we may say: in the sense that it "is what a fully rational and informed person would want for himself, either for itself, or in view of prospective consequences he wants." It is conceivable that a fully informed and rational person would want for himself all and only those traits which a person would want from a moral point of view, in which case traits that are virtuous<sub>M</sub> would be virtuous<sub>NM</sub>, and conversely. It seems implausible to make this supposition, however, and I shall not make it.

Some philosophers might wish to alter this proposal because they think a trait is a virtue<sub>NM</sub> *only* if it is intrinsically good. And a good many philosophers seem to have thought that traits of character are intrinsically good in some sense: e.g., Plato, Kant, Ross, H. Rashdall, Prichard, and maybe Aristotle, although it is possible that some did so because they confused being good nonmorally with being morally good, or because they did not have the concept of good in the sense of what a fully rational person would want for himself. But there is so much doubt at present whether any traits are, as such, intrinsically worthwhile that it seems unwise to alter our definition by restricting "good," for traits, to the intrinsically good. Indeed, it might seem attractive to take the opposite tack, and say that no trait is intrinsically good, and hence we can drop talk of "either for itself" from the definition of "virtue<sub>NM</sub>." But we seem to be taking the safest course if we leave the definition as stated above, thereby leaving our hands untied with respect to the possibility that traits of character are intrinsically good.

I digress in order to take note of Frankena's position on the question whether traits of character are intrinsically good. Frankena says that *behavior* which manifests traits like benevolence, fidelity, etc. is part of a *good life provided* the behavior brings pleasure or satisfaction. Mere *traits* of character are not intrinsically good at all.<sup>28</sup> He goes on to say that an activity may be morally excellent but is not intrinsically good unless "it is as such on the whole agreeable or pleasant." But elsewhere he says that "... I did mean to make clear in Chapter 5 of *Ethics* that under 'non-moral good' I include knowledge, aesthetic experience, love, freedom, excellences of many kinds, and so on ... I meant to think of beneficence as being concerned to foster all of these. ..."<sup>29</sup> In other passages, however, he sounds more like Plato in the *Philebus*, and says only that the excellence of an activity can make it *more* good (bad) than it would otherwise have been, while still keeping pleasantness or satisfactoriness as a necessary condition of intrinsic goodness. He does say that the intrinsic goodness some activity otherwise would have because of its pleasantness can be "cancelled out" by the presence of some nonhedonic defect, but he seems not to say that a nonhedonic quality can make an unpleasant experience intrinsically good or a pleasant one intrinsically bad.<sup>30</sup>

Suppose we define "virtue<sub>NM</sub>" in the way proposed. Then courage, self-control, and prudence will manifestly be virtues<sub>NM</sub>. So, apparently, will also be orderliness, ambition, aggressiveness, curiosity, and enterprise, since they seem to be traits a rational person would want for himself in view of the prospective long-range benefit to him of having them. Will justice and benevolence qualify? In view of the centuries-long debate about

whether these qualities produce benefits—long-term consequences a rational person would want—we had better leave this question open and say that these *may* not be virtues<sub>NM</sub>.

Let us now return to a point discussed earlier (see p. 12), in order to expand the earlier remark. I said earlier that if a person is conscientiously committed to a particular moral principle, say about breach of promise, he is somewhere on the road to having a virtue<sub>M</sub>, honesty, since he has at least *some* degree of aversion to dishonesty. We must now point out that his commitment need not put him on the road to having a virtue<sub>NM</sub>, since his moral commitment need not be relevant to the motivation constitutive of any virtue<sub>NM</sub>—honesty need not be a virtue<sub>NM</sub>. I also said that a person might have the trait of honesty, but not have all of what it is to have a conscientious commitment, viz., he may have no tendency to feel guilty or disapprove of others, and he may have no concept of a moral point of view. Much more is this true of ambition and curiosity, assuming they are virtues<sub>NM</sub>; a person might have these virtues but have no tendency to feel guilty if he thought he didn't, or to disapprove others if he thinks they don't have them, and he may have no conception whatever of the moral point of view.

If we have the concepts "is a good thing" and "is a virtue<sub>NM</sub>," can we go on and define terms like "duty" and "right" and "ought"? The answer is affirmative. We can explain "It is X's duty to do A" as meaning "X's failure to do A would be conclusive evidence that some trait of his character is defective (nonmorally bad), if all those circumstances were absent ... which preclude a normal inference from action to desires/aversions (traits of character)." And so on, *mutatis mutandis*, for "It is not X's duty to do A." And we should notice that use of "duty" in this sense would presumably be a recommendation of the act said to be one's duty, since we know that nonmorally good traits of character are normally good for human flourishing, and we can assume that intelligent auditors will be favorably disposed toward their own flourishing. There are some complications but, for the normal case, a person can be expected to be motivated to avoid performing any action about which he knows that its performance would be a manifestation of a vice in the nonmoral sense.

The language of "duty" in this sense, however, would not serve to express what I have called "conscientious commitments" to moral principles, in the way in which (as I think) talk of duty (in the moral sense) normally does, or in the way in which Frankena thinks it does. If X says to Y, "It is your duty<sub>NM</sub> to do A," although his remark, if believed and a novel point to Y, may be motivating to Y, it need not (1) express any motivation on the part of X to act in that way himself in similar circumstances, or even a desire that Y act in this way, (2) express any tendency to feel guilt if he fails to do A himself in similar circumstances, (3) express any tendency to disapprove of Y if Y fails to do A, or (4) express any belief that any attitude on his own part, or on Y's part, is taken from the moral point of view. Since this nonmoral language cannot express conscientious commitments, it cannot be adequate for a society which has them, unless we think that such commitments are unimportant and that a linguistic framework is not defective for not catering to them.



It is interesting to speculate about what feelings people might have, about their own conduct and that of others, if the evaluations of conduct and character in their society were made solely by a language with nonmoral conceptions: virtue<sub>NM</sub>, the good but not the morally good, and duty but not moral duty, with no conception of the moral point of view or with no emphasis on what is for the long-range good of society. In such a society a person might feel regretful discomfort at the thought of his defects of character and his behavioral manifestations of them; he might feel ashamed when he compares himself with others; he might feel remorse if he injures someone he cares about. But would he feel guilt? The answer raises difficult problems of phenomenology and psychology, and I shall not attempt to answer it. Would there, in such a society, be any condemning (somewhat retributive) attitudes? Presumably there would be annoyed resentment by injured parties; if third parties were sympathetic they presumably would feel sympathy for injured persons, and pity or even contempt for persons with defective characters<sub>NM</sub>. But would they feel retributive indignation? I leave this question open. If they feel it, they have no normative vocabulary in which to *express* it.

### 6. Objections to an Ethics of Virtue

Frankena thinks that an ethics of virtue, either one of moral virtue or one of nonmoral virtue, is inadequate. On the other hand, he does not think a pure ethics of duty is adequate either. He thinks only some kind of combination will do. I omit reasons he offers for thinking an ethics of duty is not enough. I shall begin by surveying and assessing why he thinks an ethics of virtue is inadequate. I shall conclude with some reflections of my own explaining why neither the linguistic framework of pure deontic concepts nor the framework of a pure ethics of virtue<sub>NM</sub>, would be adequate to express the kind of moral system a fully rational person would want for a society in which he expected to live.

(1) Let us begin with two statements Frankena makes,<sup>31</sup> which at first may seem like the same point, although in fact they are not. He says (a) that "traits without principles are blind" and (b) that "it is hard to see how we could know what traits to encourage or inculcate if we did not subscribe to principles, for example, to the principle of utility, or to those of benevolence and justice." Both these statements seem to me untrue. As to the first one, if a trait is a desire/aversion to do something, either an aversion to certain act-types, or a desire for certain outcomes (e.g., general happiness), what is needed, for the trait to guide conduct, is simply factual information on *what to do* in a given situation in order to achieve the desiderated end. What is *not* needed is moral principles. As to the second statement, it is true that in order to know which traits to inculcate we need to know something, but it is by no means clear that what we need to know is *moral* principles. I suggest that what we need to know is what we would want if we were fully rational, and which kinds of traits (virtues) would tend to realize that aspiration. What we would find, as a consequence of determining what kind of moral system would be a good means to what we want, is both which virtues to encourage and which principles to teach. But moral principles are

not presupposed by this inquiry.

(2) I now formulate a further argument which I hesitate to attribute to Frankena, although what I say may be what he has in mind.<sup>32</sup> First, he holds that some moral virtues "include a will to do the right." Then he says that "It does seem paradoxical to say . . . a man may be fully virtuous morally even though he has no morality in his soul and is not moved by concord of morally sweet sounds. This point would not hold against the agapist who conceives of love as involving at least a regard to virtue in Prichard's sense, but it does seem to me to raise a difficulty for one who conceives of love in nonmoral ('pathological') terms." What I take it Frankena might be arguing is that at least having some virtues involves having some deontic concept, and having some others may involve having the concept of virtue in Prichard's sense. So the inference may be that one cannot have some virtues without deontic concepts, and cannot have some other virtues without the concept of virtue in Prichard's sense; hence an ethics of virtue cannot stand without employing concepts it does not admit.

If this is the argument, I am unpersuaded. First, "moral duty" *can* be adequately defined in an ethics of moral virtue, so that we are not going outside such an ethics if we use it. Second, it seems that some virtues involve neither deontic concepts nor the concept of a virtue: e.g., fidelity, truthfulness, generosity. Why should these traits not be virtues unless one has "morality in his soul" in the sense either of deontic concepts or the concept of virtue in Prichard's sense? In any case, it is surely open to an ethics of virtue to make use of the concept of a virtue. It may not be open to it to make use of the concept of a virtue in Prichard's sense—that of a desire which is intrinsically good—in view of the fact that it is rather implausible to say that desires are intrinsically good. It is, of course, true that there is a virtue of conscientiousness which is a desire to do what is morally right, as such; and this a pure ethics of virtue could not allow, perhaps (there may be a semantical tangle here), were not "morally right" definable in terms of the language of virtues.

(3) Frankena has some sympathy with Prichard's objection that one's obligation cannot be to *act from* any desire or trait, as a virtue-ethics would seem to have it, but in the end he suggests various ways of meeting this alleged difficulty, and puts no weight on it. He also says he feels sympathy with Prichard's complaint that "the fact of obligation" is central to moral experience and moral philosophy. He says that "such a view accords best with my own moral consciousness and experience,"<sup>33</sup> but he concedes that it would not be easy to show that the "fact of obligation" is not an illusion or a hand-me-down from a discarded divine command conception of ethics. In the end he grants that it is hard to see even what is the issue here, and that a proponent of an ethics of virtue could find answers to all the clear arguments that have been offered in this connection.

Frankena mentions various other lines of reasoning which have been put forward in criticism of some kind of ethics of virtue, but does not find them conclusive. I follow him by ignoring them.

I conclude by defending two claims about the kind of moral language a fully rational person would want for a society in which

he expected to live. The first claim is that a rational person would not prefer a deontic linguistic framework to a language of *moral* virtue. For one thing, the latter encompasses the former, since "duty" can be defined in terms of "morally good" or "virtue<sub>M</sub>." It is true that moral thinking can be more efficient if it includes the whole range of deontic concepts; but one can get on without them, and a person who subscribes to principles like "Honesty is a virtue<sub>M</sub>" has everything that is important in a person's subscribing to a principle like "There is a prima facie obligation to act honestly." Indeed if a person had to *choose* between a pure ethics of virtue<sub>M</sub> and a pure ethics of duty, he ought to prefer the former, since the latter appears unable to explain the concepts of excuses and supererogatory acts, both of which have importance in moral thinking. It might be thought that he can do so by first explaining "morally bad" in terms of "that which a person *ought* to blame" or "that which a person *ought* to disapprove." But the second of these "oughts" is not the "ought" of obligation; and if the first is taken in the sense of an action which a person ought to perform, it is objectionable because it is far from clear that there is any *act* others ought (in the sense of duty) to perform when others are morally bad or have behaved in a way in which only a morally bad person would behave.<sup>34</sup>

The second claim I make is that fully rational persons would prefer a language of *moral* virtue (and goodness) and not of *nonmoral* virtue (and goodness). Why? The reason is that rational persons would support a morality for their society, of a kind which could be efficiently expressed only by the language of moral virtue, and not by the language of nonmoral virtue. One can ask why, again. And the answer is that the explanation is a long story but, to begin at the middle, I think rational persons would support a moral system which overall can be expected to maximize the benefit of sentient creatures. So, will they choose to recommend as virtues only those traits they can support by an egoistic appeal to the "nourishing" of agents? I think the answer is negative: there are better ways to achieve the end of maximizing the welfare or happiness of sentient beings. It is true that we can recommend the social virtues of honesty, truthfulness, generosity, and so on, by pointing out that these virtues, cultivated up to a certain point, are important for the flourishing of the social man—which is what we all are. But we may not be able to recommend in this way the cultivation of these traits precisely for those situations where there is a serious conflict between the general good and self-interest. To do this, and in general to institute the virtues with the strength we would like, we may have to count on the expression of strongly disapproving attitudes by other persons, over and beyond the resentment of injured parties themselves. If we read Mill on the sanctions, we will see that he thought we must. Now it is possible that we shall have such attitudes available, irrespective of any linguistic framework of the society; for people are so constituted as mostly to be sympathetic with other persons, and to react negatively if they are deliberately or recklessly injured. But in a society with the linguistic tools restricted to those of a morality of virtue<sub>NM</sub>, there would be no way to express these attitudes. At least there would not be the efficient manner of expressing an attitude of indignation, combined with the claim that it is justified, that we find in

the language of virtue<sub>M</sub>. A person could say: "Your action manifested a vicious<sub>NM</sub> trait"; or "Your action makes me angry." But would this be enough? So I think a rational person would want the language of the morally bad, and of virtue<sub>M</sub>, as a means to the kind of functioning informal system of social control he would like in a society in which he expected to live.

R. B. Brandt  
The University of Michigan

Notes:

1. I have in mind the following: "Toward a Philosophy of Moral Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 28 (1958): 300-13, cited hereafter as TPME; "Educating for the Good Life," in H. E. Kiefer and M. K. Munitz (eds.), *Perspectives in Education, Religion and the Arts*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1970), cited hereafter as EGL; "Prichard and the Ethics of Virtue," *Monist* 54 (1970): 1-17, cited hereafter as PEV; "The Ethics of Love Conceived as an Ethics of Virtue," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 1 (1973): 21-36, cited hereafter as ELCEV; *Ethics*, 2nd ed., (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), cited hereafter as *Ethics*; "Conversations with Carney and Hauerwas," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 3 (1975): 45-62, cited hereafter as CCH.

2. ELCEV, pp. 23-24.

3. *Ibid.* This seems not quite true. "Morally good" is scalar; but "Virtuous" is only if we want to talk of "more virtuous acts," as I think probably we can. But we can also speak of one act being more wrong than another, in the sense that it fails more grievously to meet the obligations of the situation. Grammatically "right" has no comparative, but people do speak and think as if one act is "wronger" than another, whatever grammar may say.

4. W. D. Ross, *The Foundations of Ethics*, 1939, Oxford University Press, p. 293

5. ELCEV, p. 27. This is qualified in the first new paragraph of p. 28, ELCEV.

6. ELCEV, pp. 24-26.

7. R. B. Brandt, "Traits of character: a conceptual analysis," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970): 23-37, esp. 30ff., 35-37.

8. W. P. Alston, "Toward a logical geography of personality," in H. Kiefer and M. Munitz, eds., *Mind, Science, and History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1970).

9. CCH, p. 48.

10. H. A. Prichard, "Is moral philosophy based on a mistake?" reprinted in *Moral Obligation*, Oxford University Press, 1950; originally published in *Mind*, 1912.

11. *Ethics*, p. 68.

12. R. B. Brandt, *A Theory of the Good and the Right*, 1979, Oxford, pp. 164ff.

13. *Ethics*, pp. 111-14.

14. Leslie Stephen, *The Science of Ethics*, 1907, London: Smith, Elder & Co., pp. 148-150.

15. W. D. Ross, *The Foundations of Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 309.

16. *Ethics*, p. 64. One could say the virtue of conscientiousness is a desire to do whatever a rule-utilitarian theory would imply is *right*. That would not be a thesis of virtue-ethics.

17. C. I. Lewis, *The Ground and Nature of the Right*, Columbia University Press, 1944, p. 63.

18. The writer argued, many years ago, that these terms are significantly different, in "Moral valuation," *Ethics* 61 (1946), 106-21.

19. *Ethics*, p. 96.

20. J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ch. 5.

21. Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*, 1725, reprinted in L. A. Selby-Biggs, *British Moralists*, Oxford University Press, 1897, I:69, cited hereafter as AICMGE.

22. W. D. Ross, *The Foundations of Ethics*, Oxford University Press, 1939, chs. 11, 12.

23. There are some problems which may lead the cautious person to suggest that the above is only a first approximation to a satisfactory definition.

For instance, we think that extreme degrees of temptation mitigate charges of a defective character, if they do not fully exculpate. Suppose in a given case they exculpate. Do we then want to say the action was morally not wrong?

Again, is the above definition of the "objective" sense or the "subjective" sense of "duty"? (I concede there is not unanimity about these alleged senses.) I suggest we can say it is the objective sense, since factual ignorance is being taken as an excusing consideration. If we think a person's duty, in the important sense, is to do what would be his objective duty if the facts were what he thinks they are, then we should drop "factual ignorance" as an excusing/justifying condition, and we can say we are defining "duty" in the subjective sense. Things are more complex still, in view of the fact that the agent usually is in a position only to make judgments, on his evidence, about, say, what consequences of an act are probable.

Some of these considerations led me earlier to deny the possibility of the above type of definition. See my "Blameworthiness and obligation," in A. I. Melden (ed.), *Essays in Moral Philosophy*, University of Washington Press, 1958.

24. AICMGE p. 153.

25. James Martineau, *Types of Ethical Theory*, Oxford University Press, 1901, II: 270. For Sellars's suggestion, see my *Ethical Theory*, 1959, Prentice-Hall, p. 358.

26. For these remarks I am of course indebted to J. O. Urmson's seminal paper, "Saints and heroes," in A. I. Melden, cited in n23, above. But I am also indebted to the doctoral dissertations of Craig Ihara, Library of the University of California in Los Angeles; and of Gregory Trianosky, Library of the University of Michigan.

27. ELCEV, p. 27.

28. EGL, pp. 26-27, 38-39.

29. CCH, p. 59.

30. *Ethics*, p. 91.

31. *Ethics*, p. 65.

32. *Ethics*, p. 70 and ELCEV, p. 32.

33. ELCEV, p. 33; also *Ethics*, pp. 156-59. See also his CCH, p. 51. Here Frankena says, in the course of criticism of a

suggested definition of deontic terms by means of aretaic ones, that "when we say 'y ought (ought not) to do x' . . . we mean something like 'It is necessary (from a certain point of view) that y do (or not do) x' . . ." He cites Sidgwick (*Methods of Ethics*, 1907, pp. 105-13) and Plato (*Republic* 540B) as making the same point.

34. See my paper, above, "Blameworthiness and obligation." Frankena seems to take the opposite view, 1975, p. 51.

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## W. K. FRANKENA AND G. E. MOORE'S METAETHICS\*

William K. Frankena has himself authoritatively and engagingly narrated the *itinerarium* of his mind from youthful cognitivism in ethics, as a beginner 'of Calvinistic background and Hegelian sympathies' who contrived to combine 'naturalism about "good" with intuitionism about "ought" ', to his mature noncognitivist rationalism as a major philosopher of sophisticated analytic technique and Calvinist sympathies.<sup>1</sup> A number of his characteristic earlier opinions were elaborated in response to the writings of G. E. Moore; and this body of work as a young man contains the seeds of his later development. Yet the past thirty years have radically altered the perspective from which Moore and his influence are now viewed. What changes does our altered perspective on Moore make to our understanding of Frankena?

### I

The ethical doctrine that is regarded as most characteristically Moore's is that good, like yellow, is a simple indefinable quality, but unlike yellow a nonnatural one. In his first and (according to himself) best-known paper, Frankena drew attention to a paradoxical feature in Moore's presentation of that doctrine. On one hand, if it is true, its truth cannot well be a matter for argument: it is one 'of inspection or intuition, and concerns the awareness or discernment of qualities and relations'.<sup>2</sup> Those who honestly reject it 'fail to descry the qualities and relations which are central to morality'; but that failure is 'neither a logical fallacy nor a logical confusion', nor is it, 'properly speaking, an error'; it is 'rather a kind of blindness, analogous to colorblindness'.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Moore did not write as though he believed those who rejected his doctrine to be morally blind. Nor was he content simply to report what he discerned. Inappropriately, he offered arguments.

If Moore's doctrine is true, then it has turned out that most philosophers are morally blind. Since, unlike colour vision, moral vision unfortunately confers no practical advantages, anybody claiming it in the country of the morally blind expects rather to be locked up as deluded than saluted as king. Moore's doctrine is therefore no longer seriously considered as a theoretical possibility. But, as interest in his doctrine has waned, interest in his theoretical arguments for it has waxed. For even though

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their conclusion is dismissed as false, they remain persuasive. And, scattered and unsystematic as they are, they have a discernible structure.

They appear to rest on two fundamental convictions. The first, while it pervades *Principia Ethica*, was most forcibly stated in the later *Ethics*.<sup>4</sup> It is that ethics is a genuine science, and as such is concerned with establishing the truth about a certain subject-matter. This is shown by the fact that the judgements to which everybody expects ethics to be relevant, judgements about good and evil, right and wrong, are expressed in sentential forms to which the ordinary logic of sentences and predicates applies. In cases of interest to ethics in which one person utters a sentence of the form 'X is wrong', and another responds with 'No, X is not wrong', or 'X is right', the second is taken to have contradicted the first: to have asserted or implied that what the first said is false. Echoing a passage in Moore's *Ethics*, we may say that it appears to be the case, and may in fact be, that both are using the word 'wrong' to denote exactly the same property, one thinking that X really has this property, the other thinking that it has not got it.<sup>5</sup>

The second conviction underlying Moore's metaethics is that the science of ethics has *direct* implications for practice—implications that are not mediated through the propositions of any other science. As he himself put it:

Ethics, as commonly understood, has to answer both the question 'What ought to be?' and the question 'What ought we to do?' The second of these questions can only be answered by considering what effects our actions will have. A complete answer to it would give us that department of Ethics which may be called the doctrine of *means* or practical Ethics.<sup>6</sup>

That was why he had already asserted that 'Casuistry forms . . . part of the ideal of ethical science', understanding by 'casuistry' the scientific determination of what we ought to do in specific 'cases' or kinds of situations. 'Casuistry', he added, 'is the goal of ethical investigation'.<sup>7</sup>

That neither the natural sciences nor metaphysics are practical in the sense of having direct implications for practice was philosophical orthodoxy when Moore wrote, and it remains so. Of course it is denied. Biologists, sociologists and metaphysicians abound who maintain that *their* science will enable us to answer questions about how we should act without the mediation of any distinct science of ethics. Fortunately, representatives of each group have proved acute in detecting flaws in the claims of the other groups. Moore may have been right when he remarked that

If it were clearly recognized that there is no evidence for supposing [biological or sociological] Nature to be on the side of the Good, there would probably be less tendency to hold the opinion, which on other grounds is demonstrably false, that no such evidence is required.<sup>8</sup>

However, I do not think he had much hope that the condition he laid down for that happy result would be fulfilled.

Assuming that neither the natural sciences nor metaphysics have direct implications for practice, as Frankena himself now would,<sup>9</sup> then, since ethics is a science that does have such direct implications, it follows that it is not reducible to the natural sciences or metaphysics. It is independent. Now the subject

matter of a science is what is referred to in its primitive terms. Hence, since ideally every science includes all universal truths about its subject-matter, if the science of ethics is irreducible to the natural sciences or metaphysics, at least one of its primitive terms must be a term that belongs neither to metaphysics nor to any natural science.

Moore, as has been intimated, held that the science of ethics is principally concerned to establish propositions of two kinds: those about what is right and what wrong, and those about what is good and what bad. In effect, he defined 'right' as a predicate over actions, which picks out those such that no performable alternative would result in a world having a more favourable balance of intrinsic good to intrinsic evil; and he regarded any action that is not right as being wrong.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, 'intrinsically good' (or 'having intrinsic value') and 'intrinsically bad' are the undefined primitive terms of ethics. (The adverb 'intrinsically', and synonyms like 'for its own sake' may be omitted when the context makes them unnecessary.) In *Principia* Moore treated the question 'What kinds of things are intrinsically good?' as synonymous with 'What kinds of thing ought to exist for their own sakes?'.<sup>11</sup> Presumably a thing is intrinsically bad if its intrinsic nature is such that it ought not to exist. And he also took it as an unquestioned truth that intrinsic goodness and badness are qualities, not relations or relational properties.<sup>12</sup>

If the science of ethics must contain at least one primitive term that belongs neither to metaphysics nor to any natural science, then on Moore's view that the primitive terms of ethics are 'intrinsically good' and 'intrinsically bad', presumably neither can belong either to metaphysics or to any natural science—for if one could, why not the other? But if 'intrinsically good' and 'intrinsically bad' stand for qualities, are indefinable within ethics, and belong neither to metaphysics nor any natural science, must they not stand for indefinable nonnatural qualities? Given Moore's conception of ethics as a genuine science distinguished from other sciences by its unique direct application to practice, and his analysis of the relation of right and wrong to good and bad, it is at least understandable that he should have treated that conclusion as structurally necessary. And I think he did.<sup>13</sup>

## II

Even though in his first paper Frankena had put his finger on the feature of the doctrine that good is an indefinable non-natural quality that must always make it implausible, it remained to inquire what flaw or flaws in Moore's presuppositions had made that doctrine seem inescapable. In his second paper, 'Obligation and Value in the Ethics of G. E. Moore',<sup>14</sup> Frankena not only embarked on that inquiry, but also marked out the right path for future inquirers.

In doing so, as he was ruefully to confess, he expressed his main theses carelessly, 'considering that it was Moore [he] was dealing with'.<sup>15</sup> Moore's 'Reply' was crushing but in the end unsatisfactory. Its spirit was polemical. Although, for those who had eyes to see, he conceded the chief point of substance for which Frankena had contended,<sup>16</sup> he adopted a strategy that would have been more appropriate to an experienced barrister

confronted with a line of argument that was new and threatening, but inexactly expressed: namely that of attacking the technical errors in his opponent's presentation. At a first reading, it is difficult not to lose Frankena's argument among Moore's technical corrections; but rereading vindicates Frankena's confidence that his 'main contentions were correct and can be vindicated and explained'.<sup>17</sup>

This is his own informal statement in his original paper, of what he was trying to say.

Suppose someone asks 'Why should (ought) I bring the good into existence?' Then, if goodness is a simple intrinsic quality, he cannot be answered by saying, 'Because it is of the nature of the good that it should be brought into existence'. For, if goodness is a simple intrinsic quality, then it cannot be of the nature of the good that it should be brought into existence'.<sup>18</sup>

It seems to be as clear as anything can be in this connection that Frankena's idea was that it is one thing to say, of a possible thing, 'That has the simple nonnatural quality *F*', whatever *F* may be, and quite another to say of it 'That is of such a nature that it should be brought into existence', even if it should be necessarily the case that whatever is *F* is of such a nature that it should be brought into existence. And it also seems plain that Frankena conceived himself to have been making about nonnatural qualities a point of the same kind as Moore himself had made about natural ones.

Unfortunately, because of the unclarity of expressions of the form '*F* is of such a nature that *p*' it is very difficult to express Frankena's point clearly. When he found in Moore's *Principia* sentences to the effect that good is of such a nature that it should be brought into existence, Frankena had taken them to mean that corresponding sentences such as 'That is good but it should not be brought into existence' are analytically false—an analytically false sentence being one reducible to the contradictory of a logical truth (such as 'That is good but not good') by logically guaranteed transformations and the intersubstitution of synonyms. In his 'Reply' Moore implicitly acknowledged that if good is a simple quality, then in the sense those words are taken to have by Frankena, it cannot be of such a nature that it should be brought into existence. However, he also implicitly denied that those words, as ordinarily understood, do have that sense. And he went on to treat any sentence of the form '*F* is of such a nature that *p*' as true, provided only that given that *F* has the nature it has, it necessarily follows that *p*, whether or not that necessary connection is analytic.<sup>19</sup> There can, I think, be no doubt that Moore was right on the point of ordinary usage. And Frankena acknowledged in his 'Postscript' that 'in *Ethics* and later writings', including of course his 'Reply', Moore had not taken it to be more than synthetically necessary that, good being what it is, it should be pursued.<sup>20</sup>

Such an appeal to ordinary usage is, however, beside the point. The serious considerations supporting the doctrine that good is a simple nonnatural quality are found in *Principia*, not in his later writings. And the structure of *Principia*, as Frankena perceived, demands that it be analytically true that what is good should be brought into existence.

As we have seen, one of the convictions on which the

argument of *Principia* rests is that a science of ethics must answer questions about what we ought to do. Another is the philosophically orthodox position that neither the natural sciences nor metaphysics can answer such questions, because they do not treat of properties by nature such that we ought to bring into existence things that have them. That the latter cannot be understood in the sense of Moore's 'Reply' to Frankena is evident from three doctrines of *Principia*: the principle that all truths about what properties of things are intrinsically good are both synthetic and necessary; the commonplace that if it is a synthetic necessary truth that a certain property is intrinsically good, it is also a synthetic necessary truth that things having it ought to be brought into existence; and the conclusion in the final chapter that one of the greatest intrinsic goods we can know or imagine is personal affection.<sup>21</sup> Being a state of personal affection, since it is a property of which the natural science of psychology treats, is a natural property. Hence, given the three doctrines from *Principia* to which I have referred, there is at least one natural property of which it is a synthetic necessary truth that things having it ought to be brought into existence. Yet, as we have seen the very structure of *Principia* rests on Moore's belief that natural properties are not of such a nature that we ought to bring into existence things that have them. The price of maintaining that, if a property is such that it is necessarily but synthetically true of it that things having it should be brought into existence, then it must also be of such a nature that this is so, must in the end be the abandonment of the fundamental reason offered in the *Principia* for denying that ethics is reducible to the natural sciences or metaphysics. In his polemic against Frankena, Moore was presumably unaware of that price.

With the collapse of Moore's alternative, Frankena's analysis of what is meant in *Principia* by such expressions as '*F* is of a nature such that *p*' has undisputed possession of the field. That is as it should be. For it gives the obvious and straightforward answer to the question, 'Why in *Principia* did Moore deny that any natural property is of a nature such that things having it should be brought into existence?' That answer is: 'It was because Moore denied that it is *analytically* true that any natural property is such that things having it should be brought into existence'. And, as Frankena also pointed out, what Moore denied of natural properties he asserted of the simple nonnatural quality good.

Hence the implications of Frankena's argument that *no* simple quality can, in the sense required by *Principia*, be of a nature such that things having it should be brought into existence, reach far indeed. The most obvious one is that 'it is not plausible to define "ought" in terms of "conduciveness to what is intrinsically good"', as Moore did in *Principia*.<sup>22</sup> But a more radical implication is the annulment of Moore's reason for denying that good is a natural property. That reason as we have seen, was that *no* natural property can be of a nature such that things having it should be brought into existence. But if no simple quality whatever can be of a nature such as that, then Moore's simple quality good is in the same position as the natural properties. Why should it not then be one?

In the latter part of his 'Reply' to Frankena, Moore gave a

reason why it should not in terms of his *post-Principia* position.

It is a reason [he wrote] which consists of two propositions, namely (1) that there are an immense number of different natural intrinsic properties, all of which are 'ought-implying', and (2) that there does not seem to be any natural intrinsic property, other than (possibly) the disjunction of them all, which is *both* entailed by them all and also 'ought-implying'.<sup>23</sup>

Arguing that intrinsic value is both entailed by all such natural properties and ought-implying, and that it is not identical with a disjunction of all such natural properties, Moore concluded that intrinsic value cannot be a natural property if the propositions (1) and (2) are true.<sup>24</sup> To this, Frankena made the necessary and conclusive rejoinder:

in asserting (2) Moore is so far from giving us a 'good' argument as to be begging the question. To assert (2) one must know that goodness is not a natural intrinsic property which is both ought-implying and entailed by all the natural properties referred to in (1).<sup>25</sup>

Within a science of ethics on Moore's lines, a consequence of abandoning the definition in *Principia* of 'right' in terms of 'good' and 'bad' is that 'right' (or some related expression—'ought' and 'fitting' were both suggested) must be recognized as a primitive term. But if that is done, why follow Moore (and Broad and Ross) in populating the nonnatural realm with two distinct kinds of ethical property: intrinsic value and its opposite on one hand, and on the other whatever is denoted by such expressions as 'ought', 'fitting', 'right', and the like? Frankena himself urged that

two intuitionist positions are more plausible than either of Moore's two [i.e., that of *Principia*, and that of *Ethics* and his later papers, including his 'Reply']: (a) one that defines 'good' in terms of 'ought' and 'fitting', and (b) one that combines an intuitionist view of 'ought' with a naturalist view of 'good'. (a) represents the line taken by Ewing, (b) the line [Frankena] was inclined to favor.<sup>26</sup>

This calls for no further argument. Within the system of *Principia*, there are good grounds for holding that good is nonnatural. However, once Moore had relinquished his doctrine in *Principia* that it is analytically true that what has intrinsic value should be brought into existence, he had no good reason for clinging to the nonnaturalness of good. Why he clung to it (and invented a bad new argument for doing so) is obscure.

### III

When he wrote the four papers in which Moore's metaethics was a central topic, Frankena shared what he called Moore's 'cognitivism': the doctrine that ethical judgements are typically expressed as true or false propositions, so that ethics is a science, although not a natural science. However, in the thirty years after he wrote them, Frankena gradually renounced cognitivism. He describes as 'noncognitivist rationalism' the position which he now holds, and which he has expounded in the second edition of his *Ethics*, and in various papers.<sup>27</sup> According to his present view, a moral judgement about a kind of action does not seem to be a mere property-ascribing statement, but rather to express a favourable or unfavourable attitude (and not merely to elicit one),

to recommend, to prescribe, and the like.<sup>28</sup> Of course, such judgements are often expressed in the form of subject-predicate sentences in the indicative mood, to which it is grammatically proper to prefix the expression 'it is true that...'. However, such sentences are not true or false in the ordinary sense, according to which they are true if the predicate-expression they contain is true of what the subject-expression stands for, and false if not.

Nobody is more acutely aware than Frankena of the difficulties of noncognitivist metaethics.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, instead of exploring those difficulties, I prefer to draw attention to a remarkable concession made by Moore in his 'Reply' to H. J. Paton, which shows that he at least glimpsed a way in which cognitivism can be defended: namely, by repudiating his false theory in *Principia* that intrinsic value is a nonnatural quality, and returning to the Kantian position he had misrepresented and then dismissed.

In the essay in which he elicited Moore's concession, Paton was tentative to the point of timidity—perhaps because, writing 'under war conditions', he had too little time to review what he wrote. And so, whatever the cause may have been, he did not impugn Moore's doctrine that goodness is a nonnatural quality, and confined himself to arguing that there is a necessary and reciprocal connection between what is good and what is willed rationally. Yet Moore's reply gave more than was asked:

[T]o say that *x* ought to do so and so is equivalent to saying that, if *x* had a rational will, he would do the thing in question—in at least one sense of the expression 'rational will'. That expression may be and is properly so used that to say that a person has a rational will is to say that, as long as he has it, he will do what he ought. I should myself say that this is a case not merely of equivalence but of identity—that the notion of having a rational will (in this sense) can be defined in terms of 'ought'; that is to say that so and so has a rational will just means that he makes the choices which he ought to make, or (in other words) which it is rational to make.<sup>30</sup>

When a philosopher asserts that two concepts are identical, the point of what he says turns on whether or not he takes the sense of the expression standing for one to be more perspicuous in any respect than the sense of the expression standing for the other. Only if he does can the point of what he says be to throw any light on the nature of the concept for which either expression stands. Now I take Moore's final clause, together with the expression to which it refers, namely 'the choices which he ought to make, or (in other words) which it is rational to make' to be pointless except as indicating that he thought the sense of the expression 'which it is rational to make' to be more perspicuous than the sense of the expression 'which he ought to make', and hence to throw light on what the latter refers to. The respects in which the one is more perspicuous than the other are plainly two: that it is more explicit both about the nature of the requirement involved, and about how that requirement is determined. A man who decides not to do what he believes he ought to do decides to flout the requirements of rationality, which are determined by processes of practical reasoning—even though his belief about what he ought to do may not have been reached by such processes.

That Moore was willing to assert that the relation between

the concepts expressed by '[a decision which] ought to be chosen' and '[one which] it is rational to choose' is identity and not mere equivalence is a far more important difference between him and Paton than the one he himself made most of: that he denied, whereas Paton asserted, a tenet of Kant's 'moral religion' to the effect that there could be no decisions that ought to be chosen unless a rational will—a will that decided according to reason—actually existed.<sup>31</sup> It seems perfectly possible to distinguish Kant's ethics from his moral religion; and it is far from plain that even Kant (much less Paton) would have maintained that the existence of a rational will in the sense in question can be derived from ethical truths alone.

It is bewildering that Moore did not perceive that, in repudiating his mistaken objections in *Principia* to analysing what ought to be chosen in terms of what it is rational to choose, his concession to Paton at least appears to open the way to a Kantian metaethics, one moreover that is consistent with his own conviction that ethics is a science that is directly applicable to practice as neither the natural sciences nor metaphysics are. His attempt in *Principia* to found such a science on the theory that there are simple nonnatural qualities collapsed because of the error detected by Frankena: the false notion that a simple quality can be of such a nature that things having it should be brought into existence. But if, as he implicitly conceded to Paton, there is such a thing as practical reason, would it not provide the connection between natural properties and practice which no nonnatural quality could? Biological, psychological, and sociological results about the necessity of personal affection for human biological, psychological, and sociological wellbeing—that is, about personal affection as a *natural* good—have no direct application to practice. There are natural goods it is not our business to promote. But if practical reason could be shown to require that rational beings promote their biological, psychological and sociological wellbeing, would not a *theoretical* science of what practical reason requires mediate between certain results of the natural sciences and practice? Would it not do what Moore's theory of ethics as a science of nonnatural qualities failed to do?

A problem remains. Practical reason does not require that all natural goods be promoted—for example, the good of cockroaches. On what principle can it require that any natural goods at all should be? The only feasible answer known to me is Kant's: that rational beings are ends in themselves for practical reason, which therefore prescribes that their natural good be promoted. There are of course difficulties in developing such a theory; but if they can be overcome it would follow that moral judgements about what kinds of action are right (ought to be done), and what wrong (ought not to be done) are true or false. In prescribing that an action of a certain kind be done or not be done, practical reason simply prescribes, and prescriptions are neither true nor false. Yet judgements of right and wrong are not prescriptions, but rather true or false theoretical statements about what practical reason prescribes. A judgement to the effect that practical reason prescribes that personal affection be promoted not only is a true or false statement, but anybody making such a statement has committed himself, on pain of flouting what he takes practical reason to require, to promoting personal affection in practice. We

therefore have what Moore sought, a metaethics that is cognitivist according to which ethical judgements have direct practical application.

Frankena himself would not go so far. He is willing to say that 'a basic moral judgment . . . is justified or "true" if it is or will be agreed to by everyone who takes the moral point of view and is clearheaded and logical and knows all that is relevant about himself, mankind, and the universe'.<sup>32</sup> This would coincide with the Kantian position only if it were recognized to be contrary to practical reason not to take the moral point of view. But what if the moral point of view is one among others which we may take, but are not required by reason to take? The objection to this is implicit in Moore's reply to Paton: the moral point of view professes to be more than one point of view among others. Frankena himself has acknowledged it to be 'a fact about ethical judgements . . . that they make or somehow imply a claim to be objectively or rationally justified or valid'.<sup>33</sup> If that claim is false, then morality itself is a delusion.

Alan Donagan  
University of Chicago

#### Notes:

1. W. K. Frankena, 'Concluding More or Less Philosophical Postscript' in K. E. Goodpaster, ed., *Perspectives on Morality: Essays by William K. Frankena* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), pp. 208-17, esp. 209, 216, cited hereafter as *Perspectives*.

2. W. K. Frankena, 'The Naturalistic Fallacy' in Goodpaster, *Perspectives*, p. 9. (The paper originally appeared in *Mind* 48 [1939]: 467-77.)

3. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

4. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 3-6, 21, 38-40, 110-15, cited hereafter as *Principia; Ethics* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1912), pp. 100-03, cited hereafter as *Ethics*. The passage in *Ethics* was minutely scrutinized by Frankena's colleague Charles L. Stevenson in P. A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 3rd edn. 1968), pp. 69-90, cited hereafter as *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*. Moore replied on pp. 536-64.

5. *Ethics*, p. 102.

6. *Principia*, p. 115.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

9. *Perspectives*, p. 209.

10. In his 'Reply to Frankena' in Schilpp, *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 558-63, Moore refined, with legalistic scrupulosity, what he had written about the nature of right and wrong in *Principia*, pp. 24-25, 180-31 and elsewhere, and in *Ethics*, pp. 72, 168-69. However, one of his culminating efforts was the following: the function 'if there had been or was an agent who, before any world existed, knew that if he chose, he could create a world which would have the natural intrinsic property  $\phi$  knew also that he could make this choice, and knew finally that if he did not

make it *no world at all would ever exist*, then it *would have been or was the duty* of this agent provided he did not think it wrong to make it, to make this choice', entails and is entailed by the function 'If any state of affairs ever had the natural intrinsic property  $\phi$  it was intrinsically good' (Schilpp, *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 608-09). As far as I can penetrate this jungle, the following is a value of Moore's complex function: 'Given that, if God before the world existed knew that, if he chose, he could create a world in which genocidal massacres would occur, knew also that he could make this choice, and knew finally that if he did not make it no world would ever exist, then it was his duty, provided he did not think it wrong to make it, to make this choice, then it follows that if any state of affairs ever existed in which a genocidal massacre occurred, it was intrinsically good'. Now it is not inconceivable that a victim of a genocidal massacre might believe that if God could not have made the world unless genocidal massacres would occur in it, then he ought to have made the world; but is it not preposterous to hold that such a victim—or anybody else—must infer that if any state of affairs—say the Holocaust—ever was one in which a genocidal massacre occurred then it was intrinsically good? Still—perhaps I have lost my way.

11. *Principia*, pp. viii, 25-30; cf., *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 602, 605-06.

12. 'Now in *Principia* I certainly did assert or imply that "good" was a "quality" . . . ' (*Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, p. 578).

13. Although the presentation of it is mine, and hence whatever errors that presentation may contain, the idea that Moore's characteristic metaethical positions derive from his conception of ethics as a science having a unique direct application to practice was taught to me, as an undergraduate, by the late G. A. Paul.

14. *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 91-100; reprinted in *Perspectives*, pp. 12-23.

15. *Perspectives*, p. 210.

16. As Frankena, of course, recognized: cf. *ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 15. Strictly, of course, Moore did not think that it is of the nature of the good that it should be brought into existence. As he pointed out in his 'Reply', there are many situations in which a good should not be brought into existence: for example, when the cost of doing so would be that something better would not be brought into existence (Schilpp, *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 564-65). Moore's position was that if something is a good, then it should be brought into existence *in the absence of good reasons* (as specified in the system of *Principia*) *to the contrary*. Frankena's formulations could be corrected by inserting appropriate modifications to that effect: for example 'it is of the nature of the good that it should be brought into existence unless there is good reason to the contrary'. While it would be unnecessarily pedantic to insert such modifications, they should be understood throughout what follows. In his 'Reply' to Frankena Moore availed himself of a similar licence: in describing good as an 'ought-implicating property', he defined 'ought-implicating' as 'such that, when a state of affairs possesses [what it stands for], then the fact that an

action, which an agent could do, would produce that state of affairs is favourably relevant (though only in a very weak degree) to the hypothesis that that agent ought to do that action' (*ibid.*, p. 603). Thus when Moore asserted that good is ought-implicating he himself confessedly meant, not that it is ought-implicating as that expression is naturally understood, but only that it would be in the absence of good reasons to the contrary (*ibid.*, p. 603).

19. *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 575-77.

20. *Perspectives*, p. 211.

21. For example, *Principia*, pp. 7, 23-27, 146-48, 189, 203-05; but see n18 above.

22. *Perspectives*, p. 210.

23. *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, p. 605.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 605-06.

25. *Perspectives*, p. 35. (From 'Arguments for Non-Naturalism about Intrinsic Value', *Philosophical Studies* 1 [1950]: 56-60.)

26. *Perspectives*, p. 211.

27. William K. Frankena, *Ethics* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 2nd edn., 1973), pp. 95-116; and also in various papers in *Perspectives*, esp. pp. 120, 145, 173-74, 215.

28. *Ethics*, p. 105.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-09, 112-13; cf., *Perspectives*, pp. 117-18; and *Ethics*, 108.

30. *Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, p. 616.

31. Moore, *ibid.*, p. 617. The phrase 'Kant's moral religion' is taken from the title of Allen W. Wood's admirable book on what it refers to: *Kant's Moral Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).

32. *Ethics*, 112.

33. *Ibid.*, 108.

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## FRANKENA AND HUME ON POINTS OF VIEW\*

Frankena sees moral point of view theories as steering a middle course between scepticism or relativism in ethics and absolutism or dogmatism.<sup>1</sup> The constraints of a distinctive point of view limit the range of moral judgments, provide some basis to expect agreement between different moral judges, and generate standards if not of moral truth at least of moral acceptability. Since however these constraints arise only from the moral point of view, they are avoidable if the point of view is avoidable, and do not impose absolute inescapable demands on every person. Frankena sees the judgments made from the moral point of view to include categorical ones, but since he does not characterize the point of view itself as either the final court of practical reason or as an inevitable point of view, the categorical judgments made from that point of view are themselves externally conditional on taking that viewpoint. The most that can be said is that when and if one takes that viewpoint, certain demands are inescapable and

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unconditional. The whole illocutionary act of making the categorical moral judgment is as it were limited by the condition that one's hearers, including oneself as hearer, share the point of view. Made fully explicit, what I am calling the external conditional would take this form: "Provided that one takes the moral point of view, one must acknowledge the unconditional obligation to . . .". This is quite different from claims like "If one is a parent one has obligations to one's child," which is itself presumably a claim which may have an implicit initial qualifier of the form "From the moral point of view . . ." or "From the legal point of view . . .". It might of course also be saying "From the point of view of practical rationality as such, a point of view which one cannot refuse to take, and beyond which lies no more comprehensive or corrected point of view . . .". Frankena distinguishes this ultimately authoritative practical judgment from a moral judgment, while nevertheless suggesting that practical reason will normally endorse what morality has decreed. It is not, however, part of the very meaning of "moral point of view" that that point be final or inescapable for human persons.

I shall explore Frankena's version of the claims of morality by comparing his characterization of the point of view of morality with that of David Hume, who has certain claims on that concept, if not on that phrase. Hume speaks of the need for a moral judge to depart from "his peculiar point of view" as a private person, and fix on some "steady and general points of view" (T. 581-82).<sup>2</sup> Again, in the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* he speaks of "the point of view of humanity" (E. 272) as that from which the moral sentiment is felt and from which one speaks the moral language, the language of virtues and vices, obligation, desert, and merit. There is no doubt that he distinguishes moral judgments from private interested or partial judgments by the point of view which must be adopted before any sentiment counts as moral, any judgment as a moral one, expressive of moral approbation or disapprobation. Morality is for Hume a matter of sentiment, not reason. "But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained." (E. 173) All this reasoning, comparing, distinguishing, discriminating, examining, fixing, and ascertaining, as well as the final feeling and expressing, must be done from the correct point of view and in the correct terms—"When a man denominates another his *enemy*, his *rival*, his *antagonist*, his *adversary*, he is understood to speak the language of self love, and to express sentiments peculiar to himself and arising out of his particular circumstances and situation. But when he bestows on another the epithets of *vicious* or *odious* or *depraved*, he then speaks another language and expresses sentiments in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him. He must therefore depart from his private and particular situation and choose a point of view common to him with others; he must move some universal principle of the human frame, and touch a string to which all mankind have an accord and sympathy." (E. 272).

Even these few quotations from Hume show both that he has what Frankena calls a "point of view theory" about moral

judgment, and also that his version of such a theory is different in some ways from Frankena's own. I shall point to some likenesses and differences, in the hope that the comparison will both highlight some of the distinctive characteristics of point of view theories, and also highlight some of the more controversial aspects of Frankena's version of such a theory. I shall first discuss the relation of Frankena's "caring" to Hume's "sympathy," then turn to Frankena's distinction between the moral point of view and the point of view of practical reason, looking at the avoidability or unavoidable of these viewpoints, and relating the discussion to Hume's account of the various "corrections of sentiment" and the nature of practical agreement. Finally I shall discuss just what the "point of view" metaphor does and does not do to help us understand the phenomenon of moral judgment and what it expresses.

### I. Caring and sympathizing

Frankena characterizes taking the moral viewpoint as "caring" about persons and conscious sentient beings, where such caring is "more neutral than benevolence, love or sympathy." It involves an imaginative realization of the lives of persons other than oneself, but in theory might take the form of hate and malevolence. What is ruled out is indifference. One cannot take the moral point of view and not care one way or the other about the quality of the lives of others. Frankena contrasts what he means by "caring" with Humean sympathy, and rightly so, since to feel sympathy in Hume's sense one must feel about another's life in the *same* way they feel. Hume, of course, does not believe that the capacity for sympathy is enough to produce the "moral sentiment" (animals, for instance, often exhibit sympathy but not the moral sentiment). Sympathy must be "corrected," to eliminate a bias towards those close in some sense to one, before it can count as moral feeling, and it is precisely this correction of partial and biased sympathy which Hume thinks the moral or "steady and general" point of view achieves (T. 581). By sympathy one feels pleasure or pain by "contagion" from others, directed at whatever pleases or pains the other, but the moral sentiment can be directed only at motives (T. 477), as displayed in actions, and even sympathy-mediated reaction to motives must itself be corrected for bias before it counts as *moral* sentiment. So Frankena's "caring" is, in one way, no more "neutral" than is Hume's moral sentiment, although it is more neutral than Humean sympathy. Suppose that a Humean considers the ambition of a son-in-law. Sympathy with one's daughter's attitude to this ambition, be it pleasure or distress, may have to be corrected by considering the ambition from a more "general" angle, before it becomes moral feeling. The sympathetically felt fear for the more ruthless ambition of this son-in-law's competitor may also have to be corrected before arriving at a moral judgment of that competitor's character. Considerations of personal interest, Hume says, are to be "overlooked" in moral judgments, (T. 582) and since the negative reactions of daughter and son-in-law with which one naturally sympathizes here *are* interested feelings, one has to correct or at least discount that sympathy. Hume's "moral sentiment" has as tenuous a relation with real occurrent sympa-

thetically communicated feeling, or “fellow feeling,” as has Frankena’s “caring” with love. What Hume in the *Enquiry* calls the “sentiment of humanity” is just this corrected or due sentiment, whatever sentiment *would* be expressed in a considered moral judgment, and this, I think, is not so different from Frankena’s “caring.” It is to be felt by the magisterial punisher for the punished, as well as for the victim of the punished offense, felt as much by the judge taking money from a poor man to repay debts owed to the rich as by the generous warmhearted benefactor.

Hume does acknowledge a sort of imaginative realization of the lives of others which is less “vivacious” than sympathy. Before one is moved by sympathetic feeling one first has an *idea* of what the other is experiencing, and sometimes this idea, say of the distress of another, instead of spreading the distress itself to one, rather enhances one’s own sense of well-being, by comparison. Hume believes that this “principle of comparison” works against, not for, morality, creating jealousies and conflicts of perceived interest where they need not exist. But in allowing for this effect, he does distinguish the imaginative realization of another’s feelings from a sympathetic sharing of those feelings and concerns. Nor is this idea of others’ lives as they seem to them a perfectly inert idea, amounting to Frankena’s “indifference.” Hume speaks of a set of *passions* belonging to the imagination (T. 585, 594-95) so that even when my thought of another’s distress does not rise to sympathetic distress, it does occasion what Hume calls “uneasiness.” This uneasiness may not control stronger passions such as the will to victory, to subdue the enemy, nor will, say, the punisher’s uneasiness at the distress of the punished stop him administering the fair punishment, but it does rule out indifference. What makes the moral point of view possible, for Hume, is the imaginative reconstruction of the passions of others, the uneasinesses and fellow feeling that produces, and the ability to correct bias and “contradiction” in such reactions. Hume agrees with Frankena that the moral point of view cannot be taken by those who are altogether unmoved by the feelings of others, by any “fancied monsters” who “regard the happiness of all sensible beings with greater indifference than even two contiguous shades of the same colour” (E. 235). But the way in which the moral judge is moved must be “calm,” “steady,” “corrected,” and “general.” I turn next to look at the relation between Hume’s explication of these requirements and Frankena’s version of the rationality of the moral point of view.

## II. Morality and Reason

Frankena accepts it as a “postulate” that in the final analysis by the final court of practical reason, a person will be found to have done well by adopting a moral action guide, by cultivating concern and care for others. It is not a matter of definition that moral reasons are overriding reasons, more a matter of faith that they converge with the overriding reasons recognized by what Falk calls “a man in his wisdom.” Frankena, like Hume, builds into morality, by definition, a certain range of concerns and considerations—a concern with actions and the springs of action, an evaluation of these by a consideration of the difference they

make to the wellbeing of persons and conscious sentient beings. But Frankena does not wish to make it a matter of definition that morality be egalitarian, nor a matter of definition that its word be the last practical word. Indeed he clearly makes it the penultimate not the ultimate judgment. The ultimate judgment is that of practical reason as such, considering *everything*, not restricting its concerns and its aims as morality does. The moral point of view is not the most comprehensive point of view, but a selective and discriminating point of view which highlights some considerations and dims others. Frankena says that the idea of morality represents a wager that man and the world are such that the desiderata of social concern and of rationality will be found eventually to coincide. In the nonmystical this-worldly sense which Frankena gives to this wager (unlike Butler and Kant), he is distinctively Humean. Hume spoke of the sensible knave’s choice of a way of life which represents the opposite wager, the wager that judicious dishonesty is the best policy, and agreed with Frankena that we cannot *show* such a person to be wrong. But nor can the sensible knave show that those who opt for morality are wrong, and the way of life they choose does tend, Hume believes, to confirm its followers in their choice, to convince them that the “greatest dupes” (E. 283) are the sensible knaves, the ones most determined not to be society’s dupes.

It might seem that Hume cannot be either in agreement or in disagreement with Frankena over the coincidence of the “sentiment of humanity” and ultimate practical rationality, since he has rejected the latter concept. It is true that Hume says that it is not contrary to *reason* to prefer the destruction of the world to the scratching of one’s little finger. Reason, for him, can by itself determine no preferences whatever, it can merely select beliefs about matters of fact or relations of ideas. But Hume’s anti-rationalist campaign in ethics can now be declared won, so we can relax his terminological tactics, and use “reason” in what he allows is its common and “vulgar” sense, to mean whatever does control our violent passions. The “calm passions” which include what Hume calls the moral sentiment are tantamount to practical reason—they are reflective, they consider remote as well as contiguous concerns, they overcome the “contradictions” which more partial passions generate. To rephrase the question in strict Humean terms we could put it this way—*which* calm passion is the ultimately corrected passion, the one Hume calls the moral sentiment, or the calm self-love of the sensible knave, or some further yet more reflective policy-generating sentiment?

There are several questions to be sorted out here. One, which I shall postpone, is whether whatever is the final and most authoritative sentiment-or-reason is to be characterized as felt or recognized from a point of view, or whether “mere” *points* of view are ultimately transcended. Other questions, which I shall now address, concern the sort of correction which is involved in moving from the self-love or partiality which is not, like the sensible knave’s, beyond morality, but rather is pre-moral, to the corrected moral sentiment. To consider if anything could correct morality itself, we must first try to be clear what counts for Hume as a *correction* of sentiment.

In Parts II and III of Book III of his *Treatise*, Hume describes the way unreflective spontaneous motives and sympa-

ties get altered by a "reflection" which follows on experience of both the conflicts and "contradictions" which spontaneous passions engender, and also of the benefits of the cooperation made possible by some shaping and smoothing of passions in family training and education. Experience, both of the "rough corners" (T. 486) and of the "smooth" cooperative social sentiments, persuade us of the advantages of giving some passions, in particular avidity, an "oblique" direction, and of cultivating other natural passions of a less "interested" nature, such as parental love, compassion, or pride in virtue. Why, according to Hume, do we transform avidity into justice, and why do we cultivate some forms of natural passions and give them the status of natural virtues? Because, Hume says, of the "contradictions" which occur if we do not, and because "the least reflection" (T. 492) shows us the "infinite advantages" (T. 489, 498) which we gain by the cooperation with others which is made possible by the artifices and the "artificial" virtues. We are *driven* out of pre-moral points of view by their instability and by the promise of a firmer and more sustainable position. Only if morality itself proves unstable, or generates "contradictions," would we have any parallel reason to desert its point of view for any further or different viewpoint. Of course one might not require of a reason for abandoning morality that it be parallel to the reason for first embracing it—one might just get bored with stability and steadiness, nostalgic for conflict and contradiction, so get beyond moral good and evil precisely to avoid the very things for the sake of which one accepted morality. I see no indications in Hume, however, of any such Nietzschean swerves, which in any case would be more upsurges of will than movements of Frankena's practical rationality. Hume rejects the sovereignty of "reason," but he does not reject the ideals of consistency and integrity. In Books One and Two of the *Treatise* he explored the contradictions into which both the "understanding" and the pre-moral human passions lead one, and in Book Three he shows how the moral sentiment can reconcile these contradictory drives in persons. The contradictions play their part, but only to set the stage for morality and for the civilized pleasures it makes possible. The only sort of consideration which could for Hume count in favor of moving away from morality would be a "contradiction" at the heart of morality itself, an internal incoherence or self-destructiveness in the cooperative enterprise as Hume understood it.

Could there be such a contradiction? The contradictions which morality overcomes, on Hume's account, arise both within one person's preferences and also arise between persons, either in outright conflict over scarce goods, or as "contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation." (T. 583) Part of his characterization of the viewpoint of morality is that it is one from which one expects to agree in judgment with others, as one does in judgments of size and shape (T. 603), despite the various and fluctuating appearances of objects to observers at different positions. The *point* of the moral point of view, for Hume, is agreement and lack of contradiction, both with oneself at a variety of times and with one's fellows on whom one depends. One depends on them for cooperation, for reassurance, for that "seconding" of one's sentiments which even nonmoral human

sentiments require for any steadiness or persistence, on Hume's analysis of them. "Let all the powers and elements of nature conspire to serve and obey one man: Let the sun rise and set at his command: the seas and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth furnish spontaneously whatever may be useful or agreeable to him: He will still be miserable until you give him some one person at least with whom he may share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he may enjoy" (T. 363). If the sensible knave is really to be sensible, he must contrive his life so that he gets the friendship and trust of some of his fellows, and avoids the resentment and jealousy which could motivate others to threaten him, and he must contrive things so that he not merely feels proud of his knavery but finds others to echo and sustain that pride. To succeed in this last requirement, he must reveal himself sufficiently to some for them to know his special achievement. "There are few persons, that are so satisfy'd with their own character, or genius, or fortune, who are not desirous of shewing themselves to the world, and of acquiring the love and approbation of mankind" (T. 331-32). The sensible knave must either make a false show to get general approbation, or restrict himself to a few intimates who know his real achievement, namely "to cheat with moderation and with secrecy" (E. 283). Hume clearly believes it unlikely, but perhaps not altogether impossible, for a person to succeed in sensible knavery, for such a knave not only to maintain secrecy where necessary, but to find sufficient scope for self-expression to others that his sense of self-value can be sustained. Hume speaks of the knave as sacrificing "consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of his own conduct," but the knave was supposed to think that he "conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the general rule and takes advantage of all the exceptions." He may have traded consciousness of integrity for consciousness of successful trickery and superior wisdom. If there is a fatal weakness in his position, it lies in the combination of a need for secrecy and the common human need for self-expression and reassurance. Hume's case for morality, as against the sensible knave's choice, depends more than he acknowledges in the final section of the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (where we are introduced to the sensible knave) on the interdependence of human passions which he had explored in Book Two of the *Treatise*. Could the knave manage successfully to do without reassurance, or to get it only from wholly loyal intimates, then his "heart" would have no reason to rebel against the maxims he adopts.

Similarly, if there is to be a Humean correction of morality, in favor either of sensible knavery or some other position, it will come from some instability which appears when we take into account that really happy times are not merely those when we can believe or feel what we wish, but when we can express what we feel. (See the title page of the *Treatise's* first two books.) To mold our life policy to our fully informed wishes is not enough—we must be able to express what we are doing, to make it known. The expression of our policy must support not undermine the policy itself. Does Hume's expression of the moral enterprise strengthen that enterprise? If not, then the moral point of view as Hume describes it could be corrected by some more reflective viewpoint which achieved greater reflective and expressive

stability.

There is some evidence that Hume later in his life had doubts whether his analysis of morality had furthered the cause of morality itself. Hutcheson had complained that Hume in Book Three of the *Treatise* had lacked warmth in the cause of virtue, but his real worry was not lack of warmth but the openly secular nature of morality as Hume portrayed it. One frequently advanced candidate for a point of view which transcends the moral point of view is the religious view point. If Hume, in divorcing morality from religion, had weakened morality, his own version of secular morality would fail his own test for expressive coherence. If recognizing the *human* origin of moral demands deprives those demands of authority, then Hume's moral point of view is as unstable as any partial point of view. A certain decent "disguise" of the human basis of morality might promote the cause of "humanity" better than full exposure, at least in Hume's own time.

Hume believed that his works on religion had shown how religion engenders conflict and contradiction both between people and within each person. But of course this result is not the *aim* of any religion—like Humean morality, each religion puts forward a banner to unite persons in a true faith. If there are as many contrary versions of the "true" secular morality as there are of the true religion, then for all the *talk* of moral agreement and contradiction avoidance, morality could prove as divisive when secular as it proved when tied to religion. The religious wars to which Hume drew attention have, after all, in our time been to some extent replaced by wars between secular ideologies, between morally self-righteous communist and equally self-righteous capitalist powers. Hume was well aware that to actually reach agreement and overcome contradictions it was not enough simply to announce that aim, but the actual machinery of secular morality which is to do the work of turning disagreeing egoists and fanatics into agreeing cooperators is not described by him in sufficient detail to assure us of its chances of success, nor has the course of history done anything to reassure the pessimist.

To say this is not to downgrade Hume's achievement in attempting to describe social practices, mutually correcting conventions and customs of moral education, which do *something* to minimize some sorts of possible conflict. That those very practices might engender new forms of destructive conflict is not so surprising, nor necessarily fatal to a Humean view of morality. As long as each new form of threatened conflict can be matched with a new peace-making convention or a new peaceable virtue, Humean morality could be saved. But if the very exposure of the psychological and social bases of morality worked against its success even at the most basic levels—that is in disciplining unreflective appetite and greed, or if the zeal of secular moralists promotes war, then the whole Humean attempt to correct sentiment by reflections which need no "false glosses of superstition and religion" fails dramatically. What the wise person would *then* do is quite unclear to me—if secular morality is internally incoherent, given the facts about human nature and the limits of its malleability, I suppose we must expect "wise" religious bigots as well as "wise" irreligious knaves and profiteers. But their "wisdom" would *not* lie in their having corrected an incoherence

which weakens the secular moral person's position, since their positions are merely repeat versions of the very inadequate positions which drove Humean persons towards a moral point of view in the first place. So perhaps all we can have is a cyclic alternation of inadequate incoherent views, with the only "progress" being an increase in self-consciousness of the process, and in consequent pessimism. What Hume said in his *Natural History of Religion* about religions, namely that fanatic intellectually respectable but morally barbarous monotheism alternated with a tolerant polytheism which was intellectually ridiculous but morally harmless, may also be true about practical points of view—there is a recurrent drive towards monistic "common" moral viewpoints, and an equally recurrent collapse into a variety of religious cults and versions of opportunistic nihilism. The latter "flux and reflux" however, would be humanly harmless in *neither* of its phases, since in both there will be destructive conflict. Going to war because our cause is just kills and maims people and destroys cities just as barbarically as going to war for fun or for profit or with God on our side. Moral zeal and rancour may be as furious and implacable a human passion as that "sacred zeal" which Hume tried to reveal in its true colors. He tried to describe a version of morality which was a "calm" passion, which would keep persons in humor with themselves and with one another, but could he have seen the twentieth century fruits, in colonial Africa or Central and South America, of the capitalist artifices he described so appreciatively, or the communist version of a secular state, he might well have wondered whether his honest anatomy of morality had not indeed made it "something hideous" (T. 621). The cost of not being duped may be very high.

My discussion of where Hume stands on the question of whether any point of view is *more* final than the moral one is therefore inconclusive. There may be no final view at all, nothing which counts as the ultimate correction, as Frankena's "ultimate" rationality, or as Hume's "steady" view. Falk's man in his wisdom may be as flighty and inconstant as the traditional silly woman. Hume may have been wiser than he realized in avoiding talk of practical reason, since nothing may satisfy the requirements of "reason," of absence of contradiction, full generalizability, and full disclosure.

### III. A provisional view of the point of "points of view"

What does the visual metaphor of points of view add to the other ways available to us in practical discourse of indicating both the extent to which a recommendation is provisional, the sorts of grounds on which it is made and the sorts of considerations which might override it? We have "*prima facie*," and "*ceteris paribus*" to indicate provisionality, "if you want X" and "for the sake of Y" to indicate the sort of grounds for hypothetical and assertoric judgments respectively. What more, or what which is different, does mentioning a particular point of view do?

According to a recent useful article by Robert Brandom,<sup>3</sup> the specification of the point of view determines a range of relevant reasons which would support or defeat the judgment given. It tells us which other "*facies*" need to be added before the

prima facie judgment becomes a judgment all things considered (from that viewpoint), which other matters might or might not be relevantly equal. Specifying a point of view is specifying both a range of relevant possible truths and how they bear on action. But Brandom's examples suggest that the point of view specification does nothing which could not be done by specifying a goal. He is willing to speak of the point of view of getting to the station on time, and of the advisability of castling early from the point of view of control of the center. Such use of the idiom to limit the immediately relevant considerations and counterconsiderations does nothing which could not be more naturally done by a Kantian hypothetical imperative: "If you want to control the centre, castle early," nor, when the idiom is used to justify an action already taken, which could not be done by an assertoric judgment: "Since I wanted to control the centre . . .", or a possibly equivalent judgment of the form: "I castled early for the sake of centre control."

The sort of things for the *sake* of which we adopt or eliminate goals are typically things we never get so securely that we can say "That's that. Now I can turn to other matters." We do things for the sake of our health, our financial security, our friends' welfare, our reputation, our souls' eventual salvation. Goals, by contrast, can be reached once and for all, and replaced by new ones. Hobbesian persons who pursue power after power never really get once and for all what they pursue, not even in one of the many forms of it which Hobbes catalogs. They may of course get some particular prize they aim at, some honor they covet, the extra supplies they wish to store away. But these are mere goals, which are set for the sake of the good whose insecurity they diminish but never eliminate. That for the sake of which one pursues some goal is of a different type and generality from the goals and subgoals it makes worth pursuing.<sup>4</sup> Do we get a variety of different points of view from the variety of the different goods for the sake of which we bother with pursuing the goals they light up with value? A list of things for the sake of which persons act, plan, adopt and eliminate goals, sacrifice and die, would give us a list of things of the appropriate generality and elusiveness to distinguish points of view from mere goals. We would have the points of view of health, of wealth, of salvation, of national honor, of family honor, of sheer enjoyment, of longevity, of morality. Does Frankena see points of view as individualised by that for the sake of which one would act from each point of view? This seems too narrow, since from within the moral point of view, as he conceives of it, one might act either for the sake of others' welfare, or for the sake of harming them. It is nonindifference to people, not concern for their *good*, which defines Frankena's moral point of view, although he believes that in fact this "caring" will take a benevolent not a malevolent form.

Do sakes individuate points of view for Hume? Since we can speak of acting for the sake of this or that individual, this or that interest group, the plurality of the partial or "peculiar" points of view which Humean morality transcends can be specified by saying that, before morality, each individual or each group acts for its own sake. Among the things for the sake of which we can act are private and group interests. But when we are in what Hume calls the common or steady point of view, is there one

interest, or one thing for the sake of which we commend actions? Hume might reply "Yes, humanity," but he equally might reply "No, there are *many* things for the sake of which the moral person acts, for the public interest, for justice, for friendship, for a whole variety of excellences which are useful, for a whole range of agreeable things, like good company, literature, witty conversation." Any and all of these can be that for the sake of which a particular decision is advocated from the moral point of view. Indeed Hume speaks of "steady and general *points* of view" (T. 581-82) as involved in moral judgment, so there may be for him a separate general point of view from which to consider each virtue.

We do not need to talk of moral or of other points of view if we can translate what we are saying into "sake" talk or into hypothetical or assertoric imperatives. If points of view are *merely* points from which we group subgoals under more comprehensive goals, or nest sakes within sakes, then we can simply switch locutions and eliminate the metaphor without any loss. The metaphor suggests a plurality of more or less definite viewing places from which one might view either one thing, say the temple of Ankor Wat, or simply take in "the view," where this changes from point to point, as we get views of different things—as one climbs up a mountain new peaks and ranges come into view, and the valley one began by viewing may be hidden.<sup>5</sup> Those who want to speak of a moral point of view need to make clear whether what is considered from that point is in any sense the same thing as is considered from the points of view with which it is contrasted, or whether each point brings with it not only its own view but its own objects viewed. There is no doubt, I think, that for Hume the things viewed from the moral point or points of view at least *include* things viewed from other nonmoral viewpoints, although the focus may be different. Underlying motives must be viewed, but they can also be viewed from a private angle, as well as lost altogether to view as they would be to view incapable of the sort of postulation of causes Hume thinks involved in the attribution of motives to others (T. 576). Does Frankena think that from the moral viewpoint one sees the same things one sees from at least some other viewpoints? Are the lives of others as experienced by them viewed with indifference from nonmoral viewpoints, or not viewed at all? I am not sure what Frankena's answer is. He certainly seems to think that the final authority of ultimate practical reason is linked to its comprehensive view, as if it sees what is seen from the moral and other viewpoints and more besides. With things in space, a suitably distanced aerial view may allow us to see, say, *all* sides of the Temple of Ankor Wat (in a particular perspective) but not all of its foundations nor the reliefs in its interior corridors (unless recent warfare there has left these open to the sky). Hume, although he speaks of "remote" views as correcting the faults of contiguous views, and although he thinks that a moral view considers *all* not only some of those persons affected, characterizes the moral point of view, which is for him as authoritative as Frankena's ultimate rationality, as much by what that view eclipses as by what it takes in. It considers nothing except the character of persons, and considers them in the light of nothing except their agreeableness and usefulness as fellow-persons,

where this is as much a matter of their providing agreeable company as it is of their "useful" accomplishments. Hume's finally authoritative point of view is one which is shareable, which takes in a view of the character of all those who can share it, and from which no contradictory views arise. Achieving this viewpoint is as much a matter of what *not* to attend to as of attending to more. Yet it is not really that in moral judgment and in the moral language one does not recognize self-interest—Hume's artifices regulate self interest, so must involve seeing people as competitors, adversaries and sometimes enemies, people needing rules of competition and magistrates to settle disputes. When speaking the moral language as a moral judge I do not see my fellows as my competitors or enemies, but I may see them as one another's competitors or enemies. So what I see somehow includes the way they see each other from nonmoral viewpoints, without my having to take that viewpoint. I do not think that any playing with the point of view metaphor quite captures this sort of comprehending. We could try talking of mirror reflections—as when, say, from a favored viewpoint in Switzerland I not only see the Matterhorn in the perfect symmetry of that mountain's northern aspect, but also see its southern aspect reflected on some mirror provided by unusual light and atmospheric conditions. Thus I might both have a direct view of the mountain as the Matterhorn and also a derivative view of it as Monte Cervinio. This contrived extension of the spatial metaphor really does nothing that could not as well be done by talk of remembering or somehow knowing the way a thing looks from other perspectives. One can know one has a point of view only if at least some other points of view are familiar to one. A point from which one cannot conceive of moving is not knowable *as* a point, but is indistinguishable from omnipresence, from a god's eye view. In any case even this contrived way of letting the view from other points enter into the view from one point cannot capture the way that from the Humean moral point of view we not only comprehend the enmity between two competitors, we also take action to change it, to eliminate the destructive potential of the conflict. It is as if, from my Matterhorn view, I not only see the crags of Monte Cervinio but somehow smooth them out. Here the point of view metaphor shows its limits. Only for a Leibnizian, for whom the plurality of spatial points is itself derivative of the plurality of monads, each with its more fundamental than spatial point of view, can viewing from a variety of points be an adequate metaphor for the variety of ways we can organize our thoughts.

For Hume if not for Frankena the moral point of view is not related to that of self-interest or group interest merely as are the northern and the southern views of one mountain, even when one of those views yields a more pleasing aspect. Hume does liken the moral point of view to an optimal point for judging the color or beauty of some object (T. 582), where light and distance must be just right, but he also likens moral judgment to judgments about size or shape (T. 603), where in fact no one optimal viewpoint exists. Such judgments depend not on proper viewpoints but on interpretation of the data got from any one viewpoint in the context of what we know could be got from others.

Indeed I think that Hume's talk of different points of view and different languages is best replaced by more Hegelian talk of

less and more corrected or developed attitudes, by less and more expressive languages. It is not just that some people, some of the time, prefer agreement and so take a position which makes that possible, while others or the same ones in other moods, opt for conflict, and speak the language of self- or group-interest. If the moral viewpoint is a *correction* of peculiar partial and contradiction-ridden viewpoints, then it is not simply one viewpoint among others, a northern rather than a southern approach to some subject/object. Hume describes a "correction" and a "progress of sentiment," and different so called points of view are merely way stations on a journey to a destination where the mind can "rest." Hume's use of point of view talk, although it is not, I think, reducible to talk of goals and interests and sakes, is reducible to talk of correction and of dialectical progress, or at least movement. Only if the resting place of morality proved unstable and there were the perpetual seesaw envisaged in the previous section would there be two roughly co-equal different real points of mental view within which arise all the other distinctions of means and end, *prima facie* and *tota facie*, *ceteris paribus* and *sans phrase*, for the sake of this or of that, in X's or in Y's interest, insofar as this, that, or the other. Hume does not expect this seesaw, and so the moral point of view really is for him a privileged point, an Aristotelian peak or *center* around which other lesser points of view can be ordered.

For Frankena this privilege is not given to morality but to "ultimate rationality." What then are the other points of view which are mere points of view, origins of less than ultimate practical judgments? Frankena does not tell us, and what he does say about the distinctive features of the moral viewpoint allows us to consider a variety of alternatives. One might see morality as one form of control of persons, along with others such as the criminal law, economic institutions, the press and the media, religious institutions, sexual response, all of them concerned with or "caring" somehow about how persons live their lives. We would then get an economic, a legal, a publicity, a religious, a sexual point of view from which roughly the same things, actions and policies, could be evaluated. Are these the fellow points of view to the moral point of view which Frankena envisages? Or do we vary not the human control system but the *object* of our care—and so see the point of view from which we care about the impact of our actions on people as one among other points of view, such as that from which we assess action and events for their effect on forests, or on birds, or on dolphins. The "space" in which we find "the point of view of humanity" might contain also the point of view of dolphins, or of whales, or of lichens, or of redwoods. In a book about New Zealand's National Parks, I recently read the remarkable claim that the responsibility of the park rangers is to the land itself, and to the forests which cover it—so that even grazing animals or human admirers are possible enemies, not primary objects of the rangers' "care." Frankena characterizes the moral viewpoint by the nonindifference we feel, when there, to the lives and experiences of persons and conscious and sentient things. Possibly the coordinate points of view are to be got by varying this indifference—becoming indifferent to human experience and caring only about dolphins, or whales, or about the "life" of redwoods and lichens. Or we

might become indifferent to all life and "care" only about the preservation of a full variety of minerals and "precious" stones. These imagined viewpoints, in which human lives cease to be precious to us while other things are made precious, seem unreal and not sustainable. Those park rangers must care, at least derivatively, not merely about the land but about park rangers, not merely about the cared-for but about those who feel and provide the care. To care *only* for things which cannot themselves care seems to reduce "caring" to fetishism. The only plausible variety of points of view we can get by variation of the objects of indifference and nonindifference is got by varying *what more* we care about than just ourselves. There will then be the point of view of me for me alone, for me and my family, for me and my country, for me and my fellow-persons, for me and my fellow sentient beings, for me and my fellow living things, possibly for me and the world which sustains me and all my fellows. These points of view, which include Frankena's moral point of view, seem more like a progression than a variety of coordinate alternatives in any one of which we can somehow choose to stand. We will *find* ourselves on one or other of them, driven there by the impossibilities of our former temporary resting points. It is not clear to me from Frankena's version of the moral point of view whether it is supposed to be a *correction* of self-interest, or a co-equal alternative to it, or an alternative to other equally limited points of view like the legal or the economic views, or to differently limited but implausible views like "humans for humans" versus "humans for redwoods," or "humans for gods or angels," or "humans for unborn foetuses" or "humans for extra terrestrial beings" or the progressively more inclusive concerns just discussed.

If the metaphor of points of view is really to do some work, the plurality of points of view of which the moral point of view is a member should not be either simply the plurality of possible goals, nor the plurality of interrelated sakes or aspects of the human good, nor yet a plurality of stages in a dialectical development. For Hume I think it was this last, and morality was the most advanced stage, a stage where we are both able and motivated to overlook self-interest and to look behind the actions of our fellows to the motives and characters those actions display, the kind of company such persons provide. There sentiment becomes reflexive, is turned on sentiment, and both the durability and the general acceptability of the discerned character traits match the "steadiness" and the universality of the point of view from which they are discerned. Frankena's version of the moral "point of view" makes it sound more a real point of view, one among other alternatives, than is Hume's, but I suspect that, when the relevant alternative points are clarified, we would find that for Frankena too there is a progression. From caring about one's own concerns one comes to care about those who care, whoever they are, and to share their concerns and their care. The concerns may extend to those who cannot or do not care, and even to lichens and to the land, but the primary focus will be on those, the moral agents, capable of caring and secondarily on the moral patients, those capable of that less reflective "caring" which is desire, and the capacity for pleasure and pain. There may be no plurality of real alternative viewpoints, except the twins of moral optimism

and pessimism cited in the previous section. Before we get to either of those we have only less or more corrected versions of the self-concern we can expect others to tolerate or support, and the range of others with whom we have a common interest or an interrelated fate, so properly include in our care. The range of beings with whom we have what Hume called "an accord or symphony" will indeed affect the stability of the ground morality stands on, whether it is a point which we must periodically abandon in pessimism or a homeground on which we can remain and build. Seeing ourselves as having more than ourselves, "the party of humankind," in our care, may indeed be just that inverse equivalent of religion which is needed if a secular morality is not to degenerate into self-indulgent license or its bleak aftermath. Perhaps when we cease seeing ourselves as sheep with a caring shepherd we need to see ourselves as shepherds with sheep in our care. An extension of moral concern could save moral concern itself from the incoherence I found to threaten Hume's version of a secular and undeluded morality. Frankena's inclusion not merely of persons but of "conscious and sentient beings" in the scope of moral care suggests that he too wants an extended version of morality in which there are more who are cared about than there are doing the caring. This asymmetry of care, rather than the reciprocity so emphasized in recent moral theory, may be itself a source of strength for a secular morality for beings with our nature and our religious ancestry.

Annette Baier  
University of Pittsburgh

Notes:

1. I shall be relying on Frankena's two published articles entitled "The Concept of Morality," and on a paper "Moral Point of View Theories" given at the Humanities Institute, North Carolina, in fall, 1979.

2. My references to Hume are to pages in *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (T) and to the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (E), both edited by Selby Bigge and Nidditch.

3. Robert Brandom, "Points of View and Practical Reasoning," forthcoming, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*.

4. I have discussed this difference in "Mind and Change of Mind," *Midwestern Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. IV, pp. 157-76 (Minneapolis, 1979). I have discussed some of the features of Hume's version of morality which I am here emphasizing in "Master Passions," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed., A. Rorty (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 403-24.

5. Alexander Nehamas, in "Immanent and Transcendent Perspectivism in Nietzsche," (read to the North America Nietzsche Society at the A.P.A. meeting in Boston, December, 1980) and forthcoming in *Nietzsche Studien*, provides an illuminating discussion of Nietzsche's view that "we cannot look around our own corner," that each "perspective" has its own "world," viewed only from that perspective.

## FRANKENA ON ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS\*

In his article "Ethics and the Environment"<sup>1</sup> William K. Frankena distinguishes eight types of ethical theories which could generate moral rules and/or judgments concerning how rational agents should act with regard to the natural environment. The eight types are differentiated by their conceptions of moral subjects or patients. Each has its own view of the class of entities with respect to which moral agents can have duties and responsibilities. The eight types may be briefly delineated as follows:

1. Only what benefits or harms the agent himself is morally relevant to how anything else in existence should be treated. (Egoism.)
2. Only humans (or those humans who are also persons) are proper moral patients. How we ought to act with respect to the environment is determined ultimately by the effects of our actions on humans or on persons.
3. All conscious (or sentient) beings are proper moral patients. Conduct with regard to the environment is right if it alleviates the suffering or increases the pleasure of beings that can suffer or experience pleasure.
4. All living beings, conscious or not, are proper moral patients. Our moral concern should extend beyond humans to all animals and plants.
5. Everything in existence (other than God), whether taken distributively or collectively, is to be considered as that toward which we may have duties and responsibilities.
6. God is the only ultimate moral subject as far as human action is concerned. We owe duties only to God, and we should treat the natural world in such a way as to fulfill our duties to God.
7. Combinations of any two or more of the above.
8. Nature itself is a moral patient. We should either follow the ways of nature or let the ways of nature take their course without our intervention.

Frankena's approach to environmental ethics is by way of the question: Which among these types of theories is the most adequate or satisfactory ethics regarding how moral agents should act with respect to the natural environment? (p. 4) He then argues that an ethics of type 3 (whether utilitarian or deontological) is to be preferred over all the others. He does not consider theories of types 7 and 8 in any detail and only briefly mentions theological views of type 6. He also puts aside an ethics of type 1 (egoism) because he has criticized it elsewhere in his writings. His discussion centers on arguments supporting his preference of a type 3 theory over those of types 2, 4, and 5. I wish to examine these arguments and to indicate some reasons for adopting an environmental ethics of type 4 instead of one of type 3.

Frankena rejects a type 2 ethics (humanism or personalism) on the ground that, from the moral point of view, the pleasures and sufferings of all sentient creatures should be taken into account in determining right and wrong conduct, not merely the effects of such conduct on humans. (p. 10) Evidently he holds (he is not explicit on the point) that the species a sentient being belongs to is not relevant as to how it ought to be treated. Causing great suffering to a nonhuman animal is not justified simply on the ground that doing so will add some increment to the pleasure of a human being. Although I agree with him on this, I shall try to show later why the same kind of argument can be used to support an ethics of type 4, according to which the relevant characteristic for having the status of a moral patient is not the capacity for pleasure or suffering but the fact that the being has a good of its own which can be furthered or damaged by moral agents. But first I wish to critically assess Frankena's assertion that a type 4 ethics is "merely an implausible half-way house between one of type 3 and one of type 5." (p. 11)

In order to bring out the crucial difference between an environmental ethics of Frankena's preferred type 3 (sentience) and a type 4 view of the kind I hold (all living things), it is necessary to distinguish the concepts of being a sentient or conscious entity and being an entity that has a good of its own. Something has a good of its own when, without referring to the interests or purposes of any other being, we can make sense of benefiting or harming the entity. To benefit it is to promote or protect its good by bringing about something that is good for it or getting rid of something that is bad for it. To benefit it is to act in its best overall interest. It is to improve its chances of faring well by enabling it to live what is, for a being of that kind, a good life. Harming such an entity consists in bringing about conditions detrimental to its good, conditions that prevent it from fully realizing its good or that impair its capacities to live a good life. To harm it is to act contrary to its best overall interest.<sup>2</sup>

Now the idea that we can act in a being's interest or contrary to its interest does not entail that the being has interests in the sense that it takes an interest in what happens to it. Perhaps it is the case that only sentient or conscious beings can properly be said to have interests. Thus we might say that a tree has no interest, positive or negative, in anything. It would be somewhat odd, however, to attribute indifference to a tree or to hold that it does not care what happens to it. The state of being indifferent and that of not caring are usually thought of as neutral attitudes between liking and disliking. Such attitudes are strictly ascribable only to conscious beings. But even if trees have no interest in anything, we can surely further their well-being by doing such things as providing enough water to keep them healthy, by preventing toxic chemicals from polluting their soil, and so on.

If an entity has a good of its own it at least makes sense to speak of placing constraints on our conduct out of respect for it. It is also intelligible to speak of acting benevolently toward it by intending to further its good *for its sake*. Thus the reference-class of such concepts as respect and benevolence extends beyond entities that are sentient. Although it is only moral agents who can act out of respect or act benevolently, the beings toward which such conduct is directed need not be sentient, nor need they

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take any interest in such conduct.

It is significant that we cannot act benevolently (or, for that matter, malevolently) toward inanimate things like rocks. This is a logical "cannot," since rocks have no good of their own. The concepts of faring well or ill simply are not applicable to inanimate objects. For this reason there is a conceptual error underlying any environmental ethics of type 5. According to Frankena an ethics of type 5 holds that "in making moral judgments on what we do or are, we must consider . . . *everything*; and we must consider everything as such and not merely because of some relation it may have to what is alive, sentient, human, personal, or divine." (p. 11)

It is instructive to see why Frankena rejects an ethics of this type. Instead of making the conceptual point I have stated above, which would entail the logical impossibility of acting out of consideration for inanimate objects, he offers two other kinds of reasons. Both of these indicate that he is thinking of a position of type 4 as a mere half-way house between a type 3 and a type 5 view. Thus he overlooks the central concept for ethics of an entity's having a good that can be knowingly and intentionally furthered or damaged by moral agents.

Frankena's first reason is simply that he finds it "incredible" to believe that there are "morally right and wrong ways of treating rocks, air, etc., considered simply as such, independently of any relation they may have to living, sentient, or conscious beings, human or nonhuman." (p. 13) He immediately follows this remark by adding: "just as earlier I found it incredible that we should give moral consideration to beings that are alive but without any conscious experience." (p. 13) Here he passes over the fundamental difference between such entities as flowers and trees on the one hand and air, water, sand, and stones on the other. It seems to me that Frankena here fails to recognize what must be counted as two basic categories of entities from the moral point of view. The break between positions of types 4 and 5 is not fully explicated by stating that to adopt a type 4 view is to take a step away from Frankena's own type 3 position in the direction toward an "incredible" theory of type 5. A type 4 view has an essential point in common with a type 3 view. Both are free from the conceptual confusion involved in assuming that inanimate objects can be moral patients. This confusion is sufficient to rule out an alleged ethics of type 5, though Frankena does not reject such a view on this ground.

Frankena's second reason for holding that a type 5 theory is unacceptable focuses on those animistic metaphysics which conceive of everything as minds, monads, or spirits. These minds, monads, or spirits, he says, "are not all conscious, and presumably those that make up plants and rocks are not." (p. 13) Concerning such entities Frankena asserts that "even if it makes sense to say that they have feelings or thoughts, why should we care what their feelings or thoughts are if they are unaware of them? How can I visit good or evil upon them, lie to them, etc., if they know not what they do, feel, or think?" (p. 14) Here again Frankena oddly overlooks the fact that, although we cannot (logically) lie to a plant or nonsentient animal, we can certainly visit good or evil upon them.

The good or evil in question is something favorable or

unfavorable in relation to *their* good. We may, indeed, define a good or evil that is done to them as a desirable or undesirable occurrence in their lives *when judged from their standpoint*. The fact that we rational agents can take the standpoint of a living organism, look at the world from its perspective, and judge what happens to it as good or evil—regardless of whether the organism can experience pleasure or pain—endows that entity with ethical significance. No such significance can attach to inorganic pieces of matter. Furthermore, it makes perfectly good sense to take an attitude of respect toward plants and nonsentient animals. We may adopt such an attitude toward a whole wilderness area, such as a marshland, a cactus desert, or a tropical forest. In doing this we make a commitment to protect the wild living things in a natural ecosystem from harm. Since the well-being of the living things depends on the physical condition of their environment, we may then consider ourselves as having *prima facie* duties *with regard* to such inanimate objects as water, sand, and air. This is not to say that we *owe duties* to these objects. Having an attitude of respect toward wildlife means that we conceive of ourselves as being under a moral obligation to give consideration to the good of wild living things. But to fulfill this obligation may require placing constraints on our own conduct insofar as it affects the physical conditions on which the realization of their good depends.

It should be noted that when a whole wilderness area is thought of in this way, we are not implying what Frankena calls a holistic ethics of type 5. We are not saying that the ecosystem as a unified whole is itself the moral patient. Only the living plants and animals that constitute the ecosystem's biotic community are the subjects whose good is given moral consideration. Since it is possible to further the good of the community as a whole (which does not necessarily mean that the good of each member taken separately is being furthered), we can speak of the biotic community itself as a proper moral patient. But here again it is the fact that living things have a good of their own that underlies the intelligibility of such a concept. It is not being claimed that moral duties are owed to the physical environment, independently of how that environment affects the good of living things. (The idea of the good of a life community as a whole will be discussed further below.)

I think Frankena is right in holding that, when inanimate objects and their interrelations in an integrated, balanced whole are considered to have *inherent value*, this kind of value arises from the relation of such things to human minds. Using C. I. Lewis's concept of inherent value, according to which something has inherent value when it has the capacity to contribute to the intrinsic goodness of human lives, we can correctly ascribe inherent value to inanimate objects and to the physical aspects of a natural ecosystem. As Frankena points out, such inherent value is not what a holistic ethics of type 5 asserts, when it claims that our environmental policies and practices should give moral consideration to the integrity, balance, and beauty of an ecological system as an internally ordered whole. A holistic view of that sort is trying to separate what has inherent value in nature from any relationship to intrinsically valuable experiences in human life. Since it also does not make the inherent value of the whole

depend upon the good of nonhuman living things, I am in agreement with Frankena's rejection of a holistic ethics of type 5.

The concept of inherent value as defined above is not to be confused with what I shall call inherent *worth*. A type 4 ethics of respect for nature holds that all wild creatures, as such, are entities possessing inherent worth. Indeed, to take the attitude of respect for nature entails conceiving of all living things in a wild state as having such worth. To say they have inherent worth is to say that their good is something which deserves being protected or promoted as an end in itself, for the sake of the being whose good it is.

This is symmetrical with the idea of inherent worth in human ethics, when we think of persons as possessing the same inherent worth simply as persons, regardless of their merits or lack of merits.<sup>3</sup> We judge the merits of humans according to certain grading or ranking standards (a good carpenter, a fair guitarist, an outstanding basketball player, etc.). We can similarly judge the comparative merits of nonhuman animals and plants. Thus one tree may be considered a better shade tree than another. Here the standards derive from human interests and purposes. It is possible, however, to judge the merits of plants (as well as nonhuman animals) according to standards that derive from the good of plants and nonhuman animals. Some trees, for example, will be considered better than others as providing more nourishing fruit or nuts for a certain species of animal, or for giving the proper amount of shade to plants of the forest floor. In a predator-prey relationship among animals certain characteristics of the prey animal will constitute a merit from the standpoint of the predator. In all such judgments the ultimate standard being applied is whatever furthers the good of the organism from whose standpoint the judgment is made. But whether judgments of merit are made from a human or a nonhuman point of view, they are to be sharply contrasted with judgments of inherent worth. Trees and birds can be regarded as entities that possess inherent worth simply as trees and birds. Rocks and rivers, in contrast, can have inherent value only to or for living things. We cannot (logically) do things for *their* sake.

For the foregoing reasons, then, I do not think that an environmental ethics of type 4 should be thought of as merely a half-way house between Frankena's preferred type 3 ethics and one of type 5.

I now turn to considerations stemming from the way we evaluate a sentient being's pain in relation to its overall well-being. I pointed out earlier that Frankena seems to hold that the pleasures of humans, just because they are human pleasures, do not always outweigh the pains of nonhumans. Thus Frankena prefers a type 3 ethics over a human-centered view of type 2. The suffering and pleasures of nonhuman animals are taken to be morally relevant facts in themselves, apart from any reference to human benefit or harm. Once this expansion of our ethical concern beyond the human sphere is accepted it becomes crucial to give some reason for drawing the line at the sentience of living things when we are dealing with human treatment of the natural world. It must be remembered that the principles of an adequate environmental ethics govern our conduct as it affects all wild

creatures, be they animals or plants, sentient or nonsentient. Granted that it is *prima facie* wrong in itself to inflict pain upon nonhuman sentient animals, does the claim that an animal's suffering makes upon us allow us to *ignore* a nonsentient being's good which might be affected, for better or for worse, by that suffering?

The conscious suffering of a sentient creature is indeed intrinsically bad from that creature's standpoint. Such experience, from its point of view, is unwanted in itself. But cannot that intrinsic evil be outweighed by consideration for the creature's overall well-being? And if so, why may it not be outweighed by consideration for another creature's well-being, even if it is not sentient? In human life, at any rate, we are often quite willing to undergo pain if necessary to regain our health or to preserve our well-being in the long run. Though the pain is intrinsically evil, its instrumental goodness makes it worth it. So it is with a sentient animal. Considering the creature's good as a whole, it is justifiable from its standpoint to cause it some level of suffering when doing so is necessary to restore its health, save its life, or protect it from a great harm. In that case we bring about the animal's suffering for its sake. Speaking from its point of view, it is preferable to undergo the pain and be benefited than to escape the particular pain in question but either to die or to survive in a severely debilitated condition. Here, as in the human case, the intrinsic disvalue of the pain is outweighed by its instrumental value, where instrumental value is measured by the standard of the animal's own good. Even if we go beyond one organism's life, it often seems reasonable to let the good of some override unpleasantness caused to others. For example, we might bring some pain to certain animals by treating them for a disease which, if allowed to spread, would harm other animals.

Now let us suppose that a whole life community of plants in a natural ecosystem is in danger of being destroyed if we do not prevent certain animals (which are sentient) from spreading a disease in that environment. Is the question of what we ought to do settled automatically in favor of the animals by judging that we must not inflict any unpleasant experiences upon them when no other *sentient* thing is affected? I think anyone genuinely concerned with the natural world would want to view the whole situation and decide on the basis of what would be most conducive to a healthy ecological condition among all the species-populations in the area. Avoiding the infliction of pain on some sentient creatures would not be taken as overriding all other considerations regarding what might happen to nonsentient organisms.

Further, could not an act be wrong (by valid principles of environmental ethics) which doesn't cause even the slightest pain to come to a sentient being? Might it not be wrong even if it brings some pleasure to an entity without producing any pain? Consider an act of painlessly killing a rare wild animal (say, by firing a tranquilizer dart into it and then killing it while unconscious). A trophy hunter thus kills a bighorn sheep to have its head mounted and displayed in his home. The sheep, being an herbivore, would not harm sentient creatures if it were allowed to live. Yet the hunter is pleased to have his trophy. Does the hunter's pleasure justify the painless killing of the animal? It

would, if the only thing that counts in an environmental ethics is the amount of pleasure or pain sentient creatures experience as a result of our actions.

Were we to accept a type 4 ethics in which the attitude of respect for nature is taken as fundamental, then the pleasures and pains of living things become only one subset of the morally relevant facts pertaining to conduct that affects natural ecosystems and their communities of life. The good of all wild living things, sentient and nonsentient alike, would be brought into consideration. Not only the well-being of individual organisms but the good of whole species-populations and of life communities themselves would be taken into account. I define the good of a whole species-population as the state of affairs in which, from generation to generation, the population is able to preserve itself at a high level of average good among its members in the given ecosystem. Some individual organisms, of course, may not live a good life even when the population as a whole is at an optimal level of well-being in its ecological relation to other species-populations. The good of the entire biotic community of a given ecosystem may be defined as a condition in which there is a high average good realized among all its constituent species-populations. Maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of "nature's balance" in the ecological relationships among all constituent species-populations is a necessary condition for the realization of the good of the biotic community as a whole.

It should be noted that in an ethics of type 4 it may be the case that the good of a biotic community outweighs the good of any particular species-population in it. Thus the extinction of a species, *when it occurs under natural conditions*, may not be a bad thing. Similarly, the good of a whole species-population may outweigh the good of any particular individual organism. Here the principles of environmental ethics diverge from the principles of human ethics, according to which supreme value is placed on individual persons as individuals. But neither Frankena nor I holds that the domain of environmental ethics must be governed by the same principles which are validly binding among humans themselves.

In criticizing views of type 4 (the sort I am advocating) Frankena asks "Why, if leaves and trees have no capacity to feel pleasure or to suffer, should I tear no leaf from a tree? Why should I respect its location any more than that of a stone in my driveway, if no benefit or harm comes to any person or sentient being by moving it?" (p. 11) My answer will now be obvious: Because tearing the leaf from the tree may harm the tree. We cannot (logically) harm or benefit a stone, so there is simply no comparison between how we treat stones and how we treat trees.

Now it may be the case that an attitude of respect for nature would entail a general "hands-off" policy regarding the fate of individual organisms living in a wild state. We may not think it our responsibility to constantly intervene in the natural course of events to help individual organisms, or even entire species-populations, as long as the biotic community of which they were members was in a healthy state. So even if tearing a leaf from a tree would not be doing any harm, we might still refrain from such an act out of respect for the tree as something whose life we should not interfere with without a good reason.

In addition to the general principle of noninterference, a second aspect of the attitude of respect for nature is the maintaining of a strict impartiality with regard to different species. Since all living things are entities that have a good of their own, no matter what species they belong to, there is no *prima facie* reason for our placing greater value on the good of one than on the good of another. Concerning nonhumans, at least, difference of treatment must be determined by other considerations than species-membership. These other considerations derive from concern for the good of whole biotic communities and the physical environment of natural ecosystems on which that good depends. The policy of "let them be," which inspires the preservationist's outlook on wild natural habitats, is rooted in both the hands-off attitude and the attitude of impartiality that give concrete meaning to genuine respect for nature on the part of moral agents.

The foregoing considerations throw some light on a puzzle about people's concern for endangered species. Referring to Holmes Rolston's idea of an "ecological ethic,"<sup>4</sup> which is correctly classified by Frankena as a holistic theory of type 5, Frankena says he is troubled by the fact that, as Rolston puts it, "ecosystems regularly eliminate species."<sup>5</sup> Frankena remarks: "Nature wiped out the dinosaur. Yet I am supposed to draw the conclusion that I ought to help preserve endangered species. But if nature herself extinguishes them, why should not I?" (p. 16) I have two points to make concerning this remark.

1. The fact that certain processes occur in nature is no reason for rational agents to adopt them as a model for right conduct. (Frankena himself has provided some of the clearest and most incisive criticisms of the attempt to use the concept of Natural Law to get from what happens in nature to the action-guiding principles of morality.<sup>6</sup>) The act of preserving an endangered species, moreover, need not be contrary to or disruptive of the overall balance of nature in the Earth's biosphere. So neither an ethics of type 5 nor one of type 4 is shown to be inadequate by this sort of consideration.

This becomes clearer when we see that, if Frankena's objection were to hold against Rolston, a similar objection could well be raised against his own theory. To put it in words echoing those quoted above: "Nature constantly causes great pain and suffering to sentient creatures. Yet I am supposed to draw the conclusion (from Frankena's ethical system) that I ought not to cause pain and suffering to sentient creatures. But if nature herself does so, why should not I?" The answer here is simply that nothing in a type 3 theory of environmental ethics requires that moral agents imitate what goes on in nature.

2. However, like many other thoughtful people, Frankena seems to be genuinely puzzled by the claim that we should preserve endangered species. The fact that species come into existence and go out of existence is a fundamental aspect of evolution. Why should we try to "freeze" the current set of species? Is it not purely an accident that we happen to develop an environmental ethics prescribing such action at this moment of time? From a biological point of view it seems absurd and arbitrary to start now, or at any other particular time, to make efforts to prevent species from becoming extinct. Frankena's

own ethics of concern for the suffering of sentient beings no more avoids this puzzle than does a holistic ethics of type 5. Should we preserve endangered species only when, and because, the effect of doing so on the world's *sentient* creatures is to decrease their suffering on the whole? Again the question arises of why only their well-being, and not the well-being of all wild living things, sentient and nonsentient alike, should be taken into account.

An ethics of type 4 based on the attitude of respect for nature, on the other hand, will have the following implications for our treatment of endangered species. In line with the principles of impartiality and noninterference, moral agents should *not* intervene on behalf of an endangered species when its being in that circumstance is due entirely to natural causes. In the present condition of our planet, however, this state of affairs is highly unusual and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future. Because the impact of human technology and population growth is now worldwide, most species that are endangered are in that predicament as a result of human activity. It is now known that the rate at which species are becoming extinct has been rapidly increasing in recent decades. It is human civilization, and especially the rise of modern industrialized societies and uncontrolled increase in population, that accounts for this. Unless we humans now adopt a general policy of protecting species as they become threatened with the immanent possibility of extinction, we will actually be changing in a most profound way the ecological and evolutionary processes of nature. With regard to endangered species, a completely pure "hands-off" attitude in the current world situation would in fact bring about, or allow to be brought about, fundamental modifications in the Earth's biosphere. To do nothing in these circumstances is a sign of lack of respect for nature.<sup>7</sup>

When moral agents knowingly destroy the last remaining population of a given species or even when, by default, they permit such an event to happen as the outcome of the spread of human population and advanced technology, then those moral agents are responsible for the world being bereft of a unique kind of living thing that can *never* return. There are no substitutes. Here we give the lie to the saying "Nothing is forever." When we drive a species to extinction we terminate, absolutely and finally, a form of life that was pursuing its good long before we humans even existed. Such an act, far from being "natural," is a profound disruption of the basic coherence and integrity of the ecological order on our planet. As Alastair Gunn has said, "The wholesale slaughter of entire species by human actions bears no resemblance to the evolutionary process of speciation: evolution, and the theory of natural selection, can give an account of the passing of the dinosaurs, but not of the extermination of the passenger pigeon."<sup>8</sup>

Finally, we can think of efforts to protect endangered species (whose endangerment is due to human causes) as a way to make restitution for all the harm humans have done and will be doing to the natural world for their own benefit. Here the protection of endangered species, like other conservation and preservation measures, may well require some sacrifice of human good. Yet our acknowledgment of our responsibility for harm done to things having a good of their own, when combined

with an attitude of respect for nature, calls for actions on our part to make reparation or to pay some form of compensation to our victims or their "kin." It requires that we take steps to improve their conditions of life. This means placing restraints on our own voraciousness, as well as adopting policies that will further the good of all things natural, wild, and free.

In conclusion I wish to point out that Frankena does appear to believe that the domain of environmental ethics must have its own system of principles, whatever their ultimate ground may be. We cannot simply assume that our conduct with regard to the natural world can be subsumed under the usual rules governing moral relations among humans. Nor can we assume that whatever furthers the good of humans exclusively, whether immediately or in the long run, justifies the way we treat other forms of life on Earth. The fact that environmental conservation and preservation will benefit both present and future generations of humans may be a good reason from a strictly anthropocentric standpoint for taking such measures. But to look at the matter solely from that standpoint is to assume that the natural world exists for our sake. Frankena holds that it exists for the sake of all beings that *can experience its goodness*. I hold that it exists for the sake of all beings *whose good depends on and is part of it*.

The final decision between a view like Frankena's and one like my own must be made in the light of how we conceive of our moral relations to all the wild creatures that share our planet with us. If we humans conceive of ourselves as members of the Earth's Community of Life and not as enjoyers, consumers, exploiters, supervisors, lords, or even stewards of the Community, then and only then will we regard all its members as deserving of our concern and consideration. None will be seen to be a mere means to the pleasures of another. We will hold that an entity which has a good of its own, though not necessarily a person or a sentient being, is not simply a thing. We will then acknowledge other creatures as sharing with us a common fate, dependent as we all are on an unpolluted Earth. Lastly, we will understand our place in the natural world to be fundamentally like theirs, all of us being fellow participants in the ecological order of the one planet that is our common home.

Paul W. Taylor

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York

Notes:

1. W. K. Frankena, "Ethics and the Environment," in K. E. Goodpaster and K. M. Sayre, eds., *Ethics and Problems of the 21st Century* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 3-20. All references to this article are inserted in parentheses.

2. The concept of a being's good, which underlies Plato's and Aristotle's idea of the good of humans qua humans, has been analyzed recently by G. H. von Wright in *The Varieties of Goodness* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), ch. III and V.

3. The distinction between inherent worth and merit as applied to humans is derived from Gregory Vlastos, "Justice and Equal-

ity," in R. B. Brandt, ed., *Social Justice* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

4. Holmes Rolston III, "Is There An Ecological Ethic?" *Ethics*, 85, 2 (1975): 93-109.

5. Rolston (1975), p. 102.

6. See, for example, "On Saying the Ethical Thing," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 39 (1966): 21-42, and " 'Ought' and 'Is' Once More," *Man and World*, 2 (1969): 515-533. Both of these essays are reprinted in K. E. Goodpaster, ed., *Perspectives on Morality: Essays by William K. Frankena* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

7. There is now a vast amount of literature showing the human causes for the endangerment and extinction of species in modern times. Some books that take an ethical viewpoint on the subject are: David W. Ehrenfeld, *Conserving Life on Earth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Robert M. McClung, *Lost Wild America: The Story of Our Extinct and Vanishing Wildlife* (New York: William Morrow, 1969); and Victor B. Scheffer, *A Voice for Wildlife* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974).

In 1977 S. Dillon Ripley of the Smithsonian Institution predicted that within the next 25 years somewhere between 75 and 80 percent of the species now existing on Earth will be extinct. (Reported in *The Nature Conservancy News*, 27 [1977]: 8.). Prof. Edward O. Wilson of Harvard estimates that the current extinction rate is one thousand species a year, "mostly due to the accelerating destruction of tropical forests and other key habitats." (*Focus*, newsletter of the World Wildlife Fund—U.S., Spring [1980]: 2.). He continues: "By the late 1980's the figure could easily rise to ten thousand species a year (one species per hour) . . ."

8. Alastair S. Gunn, "Why Should We Care about Rare Species?" *Environmental Ethics*, 2 (1980): 19.

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